

THE MAD PROFESSOR

VOLUME ONE

Hermann
Sudermann

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by

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE WORLD IN TERMS OF WOMAN AND THOUGHT	I
II. THE FIRST VISIT	13
III. THE TRIUMPHANT BEAST	34
IV. CAROUSING BY NIGHT	52
V. THE ROAD THITHER	83
VI. SUNRISE	99
VII. BETWEEN TWO FIRES	119
VIII. WHAT IS TO BE WILL BE	137
IX. THE ONLY ONE AND HIS FRIEND	153
X. THE GREAT HEGELIAN	183
XI. TO SHORES UNKNOWN	200
XII. THE CHAMPIONS OF FREEDOM	223
XIII. LIGHT AND LAUGHTER	243
XIV. AMONG THE DUNES	266
XV. WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE RAINY NIGHT	304
XVI. THE SALAMANDER AND THE BRACELET	340

The Mad Professor

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD IN TERMS OF WOMAN AND THOUGHT

EARLY one November evening, soon after the opening of the new term at Königsberg University, there were gathered in one of the upper smoking rooms of Steiner's café directly in front of the bay window, which, by reason of its excellent hunter's view of "game" on the street below, was called the "look-out," some members of the "Cheruskia" fraternity complacently playing four-handed skat.

Behind each player sat an interested spectator, an additional two engrossed in comic sheets completing the audience.

The cards had already decided that "Long Slurks" was to pay for the coffee, and the allotment of various liquor items was being determined. First of all there had been a round of maraschino, then four egg-nogs, and finally a respectable amount of *Slivovitz*.

All at once "Shrewmouse" put down his cards and announced, "I'm through, I must get to my lecture," whereupon the others intoned the famous masons' song, "Whene'er a fellow gets cold feet, gets cold feet, gets cold feet," but the energetic little chap with his agile mouse-profile remained unshaken.

Shoving his blue-and-gold banded white cap further back on his head, he said with a crowing voice and a nonchalance peculiar to him, "If you blockheads only had the slightest inkling—"

"Inkling of what? Out with the goods."

But "Shrewmouse" had no intention of allowing himself to be questioned.

"Just go right on playing," he said. "I'll pay my share and that's the end of it."

This, however, only served to irritate them.

"If you don't tell us instantly what's on your mind, we'll challenge you to so many beer-duels tonight that you'll find yourself under the table in five minutes."

So, whether he liked it or not, he had to give them the desired explanation. "What can I tell you?" he said. "You fellows won't believe that it's actually possible to enjoy a lecture. You go to your dissecting room, or you wearily take notes on Roman or canonical law—not to mention us philologists who delve into the noisome verbal dung-heap. . . . But none of you would ever dream that in a lecture hall there may be something like the flash and clang of blades in the fencing room, that ugly gashes may be inflicted and finishing strokes delivered, and that you may witness a sword-play to warm the cockles of your heart."

The rest jeered. "'Shrewmouse' is aspiring to higher levels." "'Shrewmouse' is committing intel-

lectual fornication." "He's trying to earn a marble bust in the Königsgarten."

Only one, a blond, eager-eyed boy whose pale skin threw the fresh scars of his first student duel into bold relief, showed intense interest. Addressing himself to "Shrewmouse," he whispered, "Say, *mentor*, what is this course you're talking about? Who gives it?"

"Do you want to come along, freshman?" asked his *mentor*, who had settled his bill in the meantime. "It's Professor Sieburth's three-hour course in psychology."

The word "psychology" provoked a new burst of merriment. "That's another of those starvation tricks like writing poetry and training fleas."

"Not only that," said another, "but nowadays they have laboratory apparatus and subjects to experiment on, and they actually claim it to be an exact science; psycho-physics, they call it."

"Shrewmouse" got up and reached for his overcoat.

"Say, wait a minute," called one of the players, a bloated beer drinker with a badly scarred moon-shaped face. "This Sieburth, is he a slender, youngish fellow with a close-cropped head, clean-shaven, with bushy eyebrows—a regular Jesuit's face?"

"Sounds as if it might be he," "Shrewmouse" replied in leaving.

"Not long ago I ran across him in a night café and

went on a tear with him. You know I'm beginning to think we lay together in the gutter."

"Rot," said "Shrewmouse," shrugging his shoulders and finally getting under way; at which the eager-eyed youth jumped to his feet, threw the waiter a coin and hurried after him.

"Well, what do you want, *fag*?" asked "Shrewmouse" as he felt the other take his arm.

"You said I might come with you," he answered. "It's bound to be more interesting than reading the 'Fliegende Blätter.'"

"Shrewmouse" took stock of the lanky, reedlike figure that towered over him by at least a head.

"You're a raw, uncouth freshman, Fritzie, but at least you've a taste for better things, so come along even though you won't know what it's about."

"Why do you take me for such an idiot?" asked the other. "I took Introduction to Philosophy under Hagemann this summer and if you can enjoy it, I, too, might pick up a crumb."

"Try it, then," said his companion. "If nothing else, you'll find him an unusual chap; but you'll see for yourself."

Arm in arm they walked through the Königsgarten, passing the flower beds through whose depleted glory the raw November wind swirled. They stopped before the arcade that stretched along the yellow brick walls of the university.

There were groups of students walking leisurely

about as it still lacked several minutes to class time. Very few fraternity caps appeared among them since the afternoon lectures were at best popular only with non-fraternity men who didn't know how to spend their time in better ways—such as skat, billiards and dice.

Inside, the light of the chandeliers was reflected in the gray marble of the staircase, and in the dim twilight the students crowded eagerly around the bulletin boards in an effort to decipher the notices posted there.

The two Cheruskans walked up to the second floor and entered the crowded lecture hall. Here they encountered the hot, stuffy atmosphere of closely packed audiences. The fan-shaped gas jets sputtered. Coughing, scraping of feet and murmuring filled the room with a subdued buzz.

The gong sounded. Five minutes more passed and finally there were no more late-comers trying to slip into the room, unnoticed. The door opened for the last time and admitted the man for whom they were all anxiously waiting. No trampling greeted him—such was not the custom of the place—but many a face lit up and many a brow knit in anticipation of the enjoyable work in prospect.

With palpitating heart the young student, Fritz Kühne, drank in the image of the professor who took his place on the platform.

The lecturer's head was eyes—all eyes. True

enough, he had a high and slenderly arched forehead, and from a scalp that was nearly bald, shone a skin whose texture had almost the aspect of a whitish cap. He had hollow cheeks whose shadings disclosed a morning shave, and about his full, sharply defined mouth, there played habitually a half-kindly, half-ironic smile. He had a hard, bony chin which in ascetic leanness merged into a wrinkled neck. But, after all, what one chiefly saw were eyes, and always eyes.

"Where have I seen eyes like these before?" Fritz Kühne asked himself, and a procession of pyramids, sphinxes and graves danced across his mental vision. That was it! The mummies whose pictures adorned his "History of Art" had such eyes—and they occurred, too, in the mural decorations of the early Christian catacombs. Overlarge, topped by semi-circular eyebrows, they seemed to stare sadly and dreamily into space with a far-away look.

"Jesuit's face," that fellow had said, and had not mentioned these eyes. No, once seen, one didn't forget them. That "beer-barrel" had fraternized with Heaven knows whom, but certainly not with the man on the platform.

And now he began to lecture. He spoke in a voice that was high-pitched and inclined to hoarseness, and cleared his throat as if his collar were too tight for him. Only occasionally a mysterious note as of a resonant bell burst through the listless flow of his

words, and then it seemed each time as if something hidden were escaping by sheer force from the recesses of his lungs or his heart.

It was a long time before Fritz Kühne was actually able to follow the lecturer's words, so deeply was he affected by this intonation. He found himself measuring the time between its appearances and when the interval seemed longer he became impatient.

But finally he wearied of this game and applied himself earnestly to getting the drift of the subject matter.

This meant strenuous effort, for the subject and its treatment were wholly new to him. If one listened to the worthy Hagemann, it seemed as if his lectures were designed for children, and even the Logic of Aristotle, which he was now giving forenoons, was nothing but child's play by comparison.

This lecturer took knowledge for granted, and even a familiarity with the technical jargon connected with the subject was presupposed.

He spoke of the psychology of the school of Hegel and of the conclusions at which the famous veteran of Königsberg University, the greatest of all living disciples of Hegel, had arrived. Every sentence was a respectful bow and yet behind it there lurked a derisive scorn which only the initiated perceived and acknowledged with a smile.

Then he mentioned a disciple of Herbart called Eckner or Exner who had killed Hegelian psychol-

ogy and incidentally had wrung the necks of several other imperishable principles of this doctrine until they finally lay on the field of battle in lifeless absurdity.

Ah, yes, as far as absurdities were concerned, unfortunately they existed in great numbers wherever Hegelian orthodoxy had extended its sphere of influence.

There was one of these champions who knew for a certainty that the struggle between State and Church in the Middle Ages could be understood only if regarded as a chemical process.

And another, Lassalle, the celebrated Socialist agitator, who, as is known, was at the same time a prominent Hegelian, had concluded that even a monarchy was a chemical process which could be neutralized only by the establishment of a republic. "The danger of chemistry to the State is hereby demonstrated for all time," added Sieburth dryly.

Peals of laughter invariably greeted such statements, which fell from lips pursed in epicurean enjoyment with uniform affability—as though it were a matter of stringing pearls of priceless wisdom.

There was another peculiar mannerism noticeable in the speaker, namely that when he was just on the point of hurling another invective, he would raise his left hand which was slender, white, and oval like the petal of a lily and would hold it toward the gas jet and gaze into it penetratingly. And since there

was also a gas flame behind it, the hand appeared to the audience just as transparent and as opalescent as to the owner, who derived, as it were, from its delicate and supple grasp, the impetus for his sword-play of words. And when he had satiated himself and his listeners with the subject of Hegel, not neglecting, however, to give due homage and deference to Hegel's greatest pupil, the Senior and pride of *The Albertina*, the University of Königsberg, whom he smilingly complimented, he passed on to Schopenhauer.

Even now the smile did not completely disappear from the corners of his mouth; it simply became forced, bitter, almost morose.

"This man," he said, "was in the enviable position of being dependent upon no one and did not need to cater for anybody's approbation. His thoughts could develop in virgin soil to heights from which his vision could far surpass the bounds that hemmed in the average master and pupil. Which of you knows the foreword he has embodied in his Supplement to the 4th book, 'The World as Will and Idea'? Therein he says, 'I am not a prolific writer, no compiler of information, no seeker of remuneration who by his utterance strives to curry favor with some public official. In a word, I am not one whose pen is influenced by personal issues.' I wish, gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart that it may one day be your fate to be in the position to write in a similar

vein or at least to be able to feel so within yourselves. But unfortunately this will be granted to scarcely one in a thousand since even he who *is* free generally lacks the ability to realize this fact. Servility is for us Germans almost as essential a prerequisite of existence as are, to quote Kant, the *a priori* forms of intuition. And if we should ever have the opportunity to become free citizens—and in the last analysis, why not, for even the best-kept bird dog sometimes breaks loose?—I am convinced that, with our beautiful German idealism, we would at once allow ourselves to be chained again. For the present, however, the word of our great statesman remains distressingly true. He said, ‘Freedom is a luxury which not every one can afford.’ But one luxury at least we can allow ourselves, namely, to philosophize in conformance with schools of thought approved by our Government; and in this luxury, gentlemen, we will indulge—until what happens? Until it makes us—s-successful.”

A faint murmur arose and died down again frightened at its own existence.

Even had there been no significant stammer at the beginning of the last word which one expected to be *sick*, the purpose of the substitution would have been clear. And those who could appreciate the art of rhetorical fencing, enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that the modification was more caustic in its im-

port than the original which he apparently wanted to suppress.

Fritz sat trembling with emotion, at a loss to know how to contend with the invisible strokes of this intellectual lash that were swirling about his head. An unaccountable feeling told him that rebellion was at work here that rose in open revolt against all the precepts he had long held true and holy. Yet, in spite of it, he knew he would not hesitate to hoist the new colors and join the rebels' cause.

But perhaps the man on the platform was no rebel after all. Perhaps it merely pleased him to rush them off their feet in mental football, only to remind them banteringly later on when they staggered about hot and exhausted, that it had all been a game. It almost seemed as if that were the case. For now as, with introspective calm, he tried to clarify the unsystematic psychology of Schopenhauer, that earlier outburst of temperament had flown to the winds.

It seemed as if it had never occurred, and "Shrew-mouse," who had been listening serenely, turned to Fritz with the whispered query, "Well, what's the verdict? Is or isn't he an amusing fellow?"

Fritz deeply shocked at this utter lack of respect threw him a baleful look. "You might better have finished your game of cards," he thought, forgetting that had it not been for the good offices of his companion he might never have found his way here.

And the Professor continued, "In a regular course on psychology, Schopenhauer would not receive much attention, inasmuch as any one who teaches or studies by chapter headings will find but little on this subject in his works. And yet, with him everything became psychology. His chief book, you know, is metaphysical in character. 'The World as Will and Idea'—I mentioned it before . . . Those of you who are unfamiliar with it, won't know what to make of the title, but in order to translate it freely into the idiom of your youth, gentlemen, I'll just for once take a daring and quite unphilosophical leap and render it thus, 'The World in Terms of Woman and Thought.' Now, do you see what he means? Does this show you how to get in closer touch with him? And how to get in closer touch with life which this day still confronts you as a riddle?"

Then the bell struck six.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST VISIT

ON Upper Laak Street where, because of its proximity to the clinics, the medical students lived, Fritz Kühne had lodgings which, considered in terms of the average student's pocketbook, were sumptuous, to say the least.

Two red plush easy-chairs were grouped around an oval table on which stood an aquarium containing silver-fish made of tin, their presence indicating to any and all visitors that the room had been primarily intended for the private use of the nature-loving owners and that only temporary financial embarrassment was responsible for the fact that it was rented to a student.

Fritz had done his best to give the room even more of a personal atmosphere. In addition to a color print of Scherres' "Flood," annexed from the home of his parents, whose imposing gilt frame became, by reason of its luster, the pivotal point of the mural decoration, a bust of Goethe displayed itself imperiously above the door, and Shakespeare's bald head, wreathed in an all-understanding smile, peered prophetically into space.

A group photograph of eight freshmen, nearly all

of them big, strapping fellows, taken last term, stood on the bureau, and blue-white-blue freshman ribbons twined themselves lovingly around two fencing swords over the bed. There was even a writing desk, a flat-topped one, respectfully called in the parlance of the period a *diplomat's table*, and a row of well-kept books was set toward the back against the wall. Pictures of his parents and brothers and sisters were hung in symbolical closeness to the photograph of the secluded, ivy-covered one-story manor house identified with his childhood.

Fritz was seated in front of these an hour after that lecture, staring fixedly at them as if they could give him moral support and guide him out of the mental chaos into which he had been hurtled.

Woman and Thought.

That's how it was. That's how it always had been. Like a flash of lightning these words had illuminated the darkness of the heretofore unknown. What could not be translated in terms of thought had to be considered in terms of woman, and what did not involve woman only surged back to the realm of thought. One thing was certain: every recollection grew out of one or the other.

Of course, there were one's parents, and love for one's sisters and brothers also claimed its full share. But from the time of one's eighth year or perhaps even from the sixth year on, the sisters were accompanied by two or three fair-haired girl friends whose

proximity produced heart palpitations and who made one shy and filled one with vague longing as they passed. And even those very sisters were veiled in fearful secrecy as far back as one could remember. Not for nothing did one lurk at locked doors and listen for the whispering and trickling that took place on the other side of the separating wall!

Then there was the home region—that dearly loved, sunshiny countryside whose russet heaths were peopled with elves and princesses as long as the dream endured. And swaying among the swelling ears of grain were harvest women with thighs as strong, breasts as full and as ready of fulfillment as they, so that as a boy you reeled dizzily at the sight. And when at night the moon's beams darted in ghost-like shadows about the courtyard, it was an empty beauty unless it was accompanied by the girlish laughter that resounded from the stables and the girlish singsong that glided along the fence.

Whatever constituted youth, produced tears, created enthusiasm, gave rise to hopes and fears, tightened muscles and made eyes glisten, must be attributed inevitably to woman and only to woman.

But now take the other side. Starting with the first attempts at spelling—then the first reader—the rule of proportion on a grating slate, Cornelius Nepos; Ovid, the first play by Schiller, the German essay, geology—the first intimation of the importance of Kant and then chiefly "Faust," "Faust" over

and over again—all these things that promised and dispensed knowledge and understanding and revealed undreamed-of horizons; everything that made aspiration spring from aspiration, effort from effort, perception from perception, ever and ever anew—all these things comprised the other—the world of thought.

Did an unbridgeable chasm separate these two? Hardly. There were boundaries where these two worlds met and mingled, where woman dissolved into thought and thought clothed itself in the habiliments of woman—in poetry, in music, in the dawn of grand emotions.

The Fatherland—that was synonymous with Thusnelda, was it not? Prussia—surely the word was interchangeable with Queen Louise? Religion—was not the Virgin Mary its equivalent? Even to him, a Protestant, and how much more so to those who worshiped her as a goddess? Truly, Woman or Thought, Woman and Thought, there was nothing else.

And what right had anything in the scheme of life that was not governed, nurtured and sanctified by one or the other? Was it not a superfluous, time-wasting adjunct, fit only to be destroyed forever?

To be sure, friendship was also entitled to its share. The man who does not seek companionship becomes stunted; only, these companions must serve a purpose, must act as pathfinders, as whetstones to

the intellect, or as external stimuli when one's own strength threatens to fail. And thus, wisely put to use, they, too, minister to *thought* or else prove beneficial on the other side in alleviating the torments of emotional strain and futile longing engendered in a lonely young man by *woman* who nearly always eludes him.

And for that reason the fraternity carousals might as well continue to play their part in life in spite of the ear-splitting noise, the compulsory beer-swilling and the tiresome confidences of men who really were complete strangers to one but who behaved outwardly like brothers. The same could be claimed for the fencing matches which at least strengthened the biceps and made the blood course faster through the brain.

Woman and Thought! A new watchword that restored order where there was emotional chaos and branded as ridiculous the erstwhile conception of sin; that created a sense of balance out of which a new strength, a new happiness, a new feeling of self-possession sprang into being.

Surely the man who supplied this philosophy had thereby become his benefactor. Surely that man would also have the power to help him determine his future destinies.

The next few days passed . . . evening convivialities—classes—fencing room, two exciting matches in fact—all these passed by scarcely noticed. And

with increasing clarity the firm resolve emerged from the conflict in his soul, to risk a visit to this miracle man and learn from him what trend his future should take.

The fraternity brothers he questioned knew little about him. "Shrewmouse" answered all of his inquiries with a condescending smile, and the "beer barrel" who, according to his own account, had been on a spree with him, beat a cautious retreat and observed that on second thought it must have been some one else.

"What do I really want of him?" Fritz asked himself, and was unable to find an answer.

His program was definitely set and neither could nor should be rearranged. On the contrary, if parents were willing to put their son through the expensive and favorite course of law, the only channel leading to the highest honors in the Government service, he should consider himself the most fortunate among thousands.

If only he were not possessed of that cursed curiosity that filled him with an insatiable desire to explore every nook and cranny of human knowledge.

Not only did he skirt the edges of philosophy, but he played around a little with history of art, and he had even been seen at and roundly bantered for attending the lectures on the literature of India that Professor Pfeifferling, the noted Germanic scholar, gave for his own relaxation as he put it.

If he was only looking for an excuse to further pursue this visionary trend he could this very day have shed the somber robe of the jurist, hung it on a nail and assumed the more colorful trappings of the dilettante and become a universal laughing stock.

But be that as it may! His visit to the Professor was inscribed on the scroll of destiny and to shirk it would be cowardice.

Then on with it!

It was on a Saturday afternoon when none of the professors were holding class that he went fearfully yet hopefully on his way to Front-Mews Road where the Secretary had told him Professor Sieburth lived.

His name was not on any of the plates that were placed next to each bell and which apprised you of the name of each tenant, floor by floor. So he chose a bell at random and trusted to luck to get the information he wanted. And when the outer door flew back and a girlish voice called, "Whom do you wish to see?" he soon learned that he had not rung the wrong one.

"The Professor is not at home at the moment," that same young voice further informed him, "but he will surely be back soon and if you would care to wait—"

"Yes, I should like to do that," he replied, although he would have much preferred to turn quickly around and bolt if it had not been for the

silvery voice that came to him from above and warmed his heart.

"Woman and Thought," he said to himself as he climbed the stairs.

But it was no woman who waited for him at the head of the stairs; in fact she was little more than a child. She was tall beyond her years and faint traces of approaching womanhood were manifesting themselves in her gently rounded contours, but even so she was only a child with the inquisitive look of childhood in her blue eyes. Her blond braids lay in a wreath above her little flushed face, forming an all-encompassing halo. Her reddened hands protruded awkwardly from sleeves long since outgrown and there was something saintly in her timid smile.

He doffed the cap that had opened the way for many triumphs—yet as he stood there before her he felt no less diffident than she appeared to him.

She hesitated for a moment, embarrassed, then opened the right-hand door through which the red glow of evening streamed and enveloped them both.

"If you would be so kind," she said, faltering, and he followed her, bowing stiffly again and again as befitted the good manners of a fraternity man.

He found himself in an unpretentious middle-class room, very little better than the one he occupied, but flooded with evening sunlight. Almost the only difference was the absence of a bed, but in its place there was a sewing table and a machine which

gave conclusive proof that industrious feminine hands busied themselves here. Books and copy books lay on the oval center table, and where, in his instance, the aquarium was displayed to distinct advantage, here a monumental desk set of cast-iron and stone arose in splendor.

She silently offered him a chair that stood near the window, then gathered books and blank books together with the evident intention of disappearing with them. At which he found his courage and launched forth into a conversation.

"Does the Professor live here with you?" he asked as he rose.

She laid her school paraphernalia back on the table and shaking off the shyness that had overpowered her, she answered, "Yes, that is to say, in reality we live with the Professor, Mamma and I, yes indeed."

"Have you lived together long?" he inquired.

"For the last four years, ever since he has been at Königsberg."

And when it did not seem to quite penetrate, she elaborated, "We rented the rooms but the furniture in the Professor's room belongs to him, and Mamma keeps house and cooks for him."

"Do many students come to visit him?" he probed.

She shook her head and smiled. "Not at all! During some terms hardly any one comes and those who wear the insignia of a fraternity surely never

do. The Professor says, 'Why should they come? I am of no use to them when examinations come around. Not only that, but every one of them is afraid that I might make sport of him.' Yes, that's what he often has said."

"But does he make fun of you, too?" Fritz asked. She shook her head again but this time in emphatic denial. "In reality he is so good—so very good—that's why we love him so, Mamma and I. Sometimes we quarrel over who loves him more but I guess one of us loves him about as much as the other. We don't associate with any one and so we live only for him."

"Your father then is no longer living?" he inquired further.

Her face fell. "He hasn't been for some time," she said. "He died when I was still small and that is why we are poor."

Then, as if frightened by her unwarranted confidences, she arose and again started busying herself with the books. "I think I'd better go," she stammered. He fervently begged her to stay a while longer. "Do please tell me more about the Professor," he urged, "if you don't want to tell me any more about yourself."

As an indication of compliance, she sat down again.

"I suppose you would like him to approve your late registration?" she asked. As the daughter of a

professor's housekeeper, she was naturally familiar with the academic terms.

He confided that he was a law student and did not even attend the Professor's lectures.

"Then what do you want here?" she asked, her eyes growing big with surprise.

Now it was his turn to confide in her. He told her of the influence the Professor exerted over him and that it was his dearest wish that the whole of his future should be based on guidance he hoped to receive from him.

"I can readily understand that," she said. "At one time or another all of us young people find ourselves in a quandary and don't know which way to turn."

"But you can come to him for advice every day," he said, and became consumed with envy at the thought that she could constantly be in close touch with this revered man.

"Good Heavens," she cried, and looked toward the door with terror-stricken eyes as if he were about to enter the room. "Why, I wouldn't dare do such a thing. Sometimes when he is not going out and is tired of writing, he sits down over there in the corner of the sofa and smokes in quiet and Mother sews while I do my school homework. Then he is likely to bend over my books and tell me this and that, but I always get hot all over and I am glad when he is sitting in his corner again."

"And what does he talk to you about when you bring him his meals and things?"

"But I don't do that," she said, appalled at the very thought. "Mother looks after all of that herself. At the utmost I may refill his water bottle or do something of the kind. He has his own separate entrance from the courtyard so that sometimes for weeks I don't see or hear anything of him."

"And what does he do as a rule in the evenings?"

"He frequently goes out into society, for they all fight for his company, and then he sometimes comes to me to have his white cravat tied, but often he goes out in street clothes and then Mamma says, 'To-night he is going on a tour of discovery.'"

"And what does he discover?"

"Oh, if one knew that," she cried, "but everything about him is a mystery. Mother says he cannot satiate his appetite for life. And sometimes through the wall one hears . . ." She paused in embarrassment.

"What does one hear?"

"No, I won't tell you that," she faltered. "I mustn't tell."

"Why not?"

"Because perhaps it might hurt him, not that it is anything bad—for Heaven's sake, no! but you are a complete stranger to him and if it comes to that, to me too. How easily you might misunderstand me, and then the damage would be done."

"No harm will ever come to him through me," he assured her. "I admire him far too much for that."

"And so you should," she cried, the enthusiasm, usual between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, flashing from her eyes, "because he deserves it more than any other human being. And I could tell you a great deal more about him too."

"Everything except what you sometimes hear through the wall—that you won't tell," he teased.

Involuntarily she drew a step closer to him and looked earnestly into his face. "Perhaps even that," she said, "but in order to do that we should have to know each other very well and I should have to be very sure of you."

"But to that end it would be necessary for us first to become acquainted with each other," he said, "and if you give me no opportunity—"

"How do you mean that?" she faltered.

"Well, that we ought to meet each other occasionally—at the Königsgarten for example."

"Oh, God!" she exclaimed, laughing so loud that in her embarrassment it sounded almost like a shout. "Meet there where sweethearts have their rendezvous? One walk there and one is on every gossip's tongue."

"Or when winter comes at the skating rink."

"That would be a much better plan," she reflected, "but I don't even know your name!"

He begged to be forgiven and leaping to his feet

introduced himself, not forgetting to mention that this was his second semester and that he hoped to obtain his fraternity ribbon in the near future.

"My name is Helena Schimmelpfennig," she said, "and I am in the graduating class. By Easter I expect to have finished. That is about equivalent to the ribbon, or don't you think so?"

He agreed with her ardently. If, in her pride, she had not beamed at him so winningly he might have put forward some reservations.

"Then I go to teacher's training," she continued, a troubled, anxious expression settling on her face. "There life will become even more difficult."

"Is it already so hard, then?" he asked, and the exuberance of his youth danced in eyes that were twitching with merriment.

But she remained as serious as before. "If it were not hard for you too, would you be here?"

Then he, too, became serious. "You are right," he said, "and for that reason we ought to stick together and be good friends. Will you?"

"Gladly," she answered simply, "only I couldn't make appointments to meet you and that kind of thing; my conscience would trouble me."

"Then good luck will have to come to our assistance."

"I'll take a chance on that," she agreed, "and then we can talk of him as much as we like—he furnishes enough riddles that want solving; that you'll see for

yourself right now, for unless I'm very much mistaken . . .” She listened in the direction of the stairs.

The door opened and a pale, though still pretty, woman with dark, sad eyes and a set, frigid smile came slowly into the room and with a puzzled look measured the young Cheruscan who had risen to his feet with considerable embarrassment in an effort to account for his presence in the best way he could to the girl's mother—for she could be no one else.

But Helena anticipated him. “Mr. Kühne is waiting for the Professor,” she said quite casually, “so I asked him to come in.”

“I just saw the Professor come home,” the mother said in a drawling monotone, “and if you like I will announce you.” After which she went out into the hall and one heard her knocking on the next door.

Now that the terrifying moment was close at hand he felt his heart pounding in his throat. Listening expectantly, the young people looked at each other. Neither of them could find the courage to utter a word of parting.

“The Professor will see you,” the mother said as she returned.

He reached for his cap, bowed in the accepted manner of his fraternity to each one respectively and, with limbs stiffened by fright, he walked across the hall to the Professor.

The latter stood closely surrounded by rows of

books in front of a square table that was covered with gray oilcloth. "My desk is handsomer," thought Fritz in the midst of his tribulation, and saw that the Professor was looking at him with a cool smile.

"What can I do for you?"

"Professor—Professor—if you will pardon me . . ."

The smile became warmer, almost confidential. "Please be seated."

Obediently he dropped into the stiff-backed sofa, one thought and only one in his mind. "How will I get out of here with a whole hide?"

"Which of my courses do you attend? I do not seem to remember having seen you among my pupils."

"I—I really have no right to come to you, Professor, for I study law, and . . . and . . ."

"There are some law students who attend my lectures."

Then he took heart and told him straightway of his great emotional experience at the afternoon lecture and how he had risked a visit to him in the hope of finding in him a guide for his future career.

The Professor turned the chair in which he had seated himself toward him and looked into his hands just as he was accustomed to do in class.

"What was it that made such an unusual impression on you?" he asked.

"Impression—why, everything," Fritz stammered, "but principally that the whole world is made up of actually nothing but Woman and Thought—that was a revelation to me."

The Professor smiled that scurvy smile with which Fritz was familiar from the lecture hall, and said, "As long as your monthly allowance, and I hope it is a generous one, lasts, you will have no reason to doubt the truth of that statement, but if you were forced to earn your daily bread, you would be compelled to adopt quite another philosophy, one which Schiller, my colleague and a disciple of Kant, describes and with which you are doubtless familiar."

"The world is kept in motion," Fritz quoted uncertainly.

"By want and love's devotion," concluded the Professor. "And so it is, my dear fellow. The world of the senses may remain stationary but the intellectual side needs quite another axis around which to rotate . . . Be happy that you are in a position to live according to my theory. You have nothing to do but to strike a happy medium between these two powerful factors and your youth will be a blessed one."

But all this did not help Fritz and for that reason he undertook to put his doubts as to the advisability of continuing his present course of studies, before this respected man. He told him of his intense desire for knowledge in widely varying subjects and

above all, about his almost painful eagerness to ponder over everything that the great philosophers had thought of in ages past.

"What shall I do, Professor?" he said in concluding his confession. "I see for myself that I cannot cope with all that I should like to learn, particularly since the fraternity makes increasing demands and a second fencing match is on the calendar and possibly even a third before I am granted full membership. After that, my duties and responsibilities will play havoc with all my other interests anyway. Shall I remain in the fraternity or shall I resign? Or do you think I should ask my parents to allow me to give up law? . . . Simply to nibble at one thing and another seems frivolous to me—in fact, almost contemptible—but as yet I don't feel any particular urge to devote myself to any one specific subject; besides, one can't earn a living at any of these and circumstances at home do not permit of my going in for an academic career."

The Professor rose and as Fritz was about to follow suit, he pushed him back in his seat. Then he walked around the table two or three times and sat down again.

"Well, what am I going to do with you, my dear fellow?" he asked, and his supernatural eyes gleamed out of their dark sockets at Fritz, who was waiting for his answer. "If I tell you the truth, you will think I am scoffing at you. And perhaps it is scorn;

these times merit nothing better . . . You see you have a good berth; for even the State itself covers you with its protecting mantle . . . Law student, fraternity man, the son of respected parents—perhaps you are even on calling terms with the district judge. Now tell me, if you can, what more can you ask of Fate? Blessings swarm around you like flies. If you are not altogether impossible, you will be helping to govern our country ten years from now, and in twenty I, grown gray in the meantime as a rank outsider, will probably be presenting myself at your office in the administration building and pleading for an appointment as full professor.”

Fritz felt as if each word were a lash of a whip. “It may have been presumptuous of me to come to you, Professor,” he cried, “but even so . . .”

“I told you,” the other said, interrupting him, “that you would think I was making sport of you but I was only speaking to you as an honest man. . . . Of course, if you had come to me with a piece of work that would have convinced me that some demon force was driving you, I could have dealt differently with you but it is not a function of scholarship to countenance a harmonious existence. Therefore, go in peace and drink your beer, fight your duels and by all means engage a good tutor in time to pull you through your examinations. And don’t neglect to secure your J.U.D. degree. It will materially enhance the appearance of your visiting card.”

The tears nearly came to Fritz's eyes. "Weighed in the balance and found wanting," a voice inside seemed to cry.

"Well, well, well," he heard the Professor say in a consoling tone of voice. "None of that was meant in bad part and you still have lots of time in which to do your nibbling. And you needn't be afraid of coming to my lectures. I am also giving a course on Locke and Hume. That is an excellent spring-board from which to dive into Kant. We get to him in the next semester and when you will have thoroughly digested him, you will be ready for glimpses of distant views."

"Then what you said before was not a reflection on my ability?"

"What do I know about your ability?" replied the Professor, "and what is ability? To turn out a normal result of our pedagogy is no great achievement and talents are as cheap as blackberries . . . As I said before, it all depends upon the demon within us . . . If you feel him piercing you with fiery shafts, if the saliva turns to gall in your mouth, if, each day, he instills a new madness in your brain, then even if you die in the street or in the poor-house, you will at least have had the stuff in you of which men are made."

Fritz pulled himself together and framed a timid observation.

"Then industry and ambition and the concentra-

tion of all one's forces count for nothing?" he asked.

The Professor turned in his swivel chair in the direction of his desk and pointed to the pewter oil lamp which stood in the left corner waiting for evening to come. "There stands our benefactress," he said. "If it were not for her, there would be no intellectual Germany, for nothing takes root in our minds without cramming. But I am afraid that you and I do not quite understand each other. How old are you?"

"Nineteen, Professor."

"Then we can't possibly understand each other. You have come to me a few years too soon, my friend."

Fritz rose abruptly, for he felt that he had been dismissed.

"Or rather—well, never mind!—come again sometime. Come whenever you feel that you need me; or come whether you need me or not. Perhaps you may be of some use to me. One never knows such things exactly ahead of time."

Fritz, in exuberant gratitude, grasped the cool, porcelain-like hand that was extended to him.

And when he stood in the street and looked from the opposite side at the gray house which was in no way different from its neighbors, it seemed to him that the two forces which, according to the Professor, ruled the world, Woman and Thought, had found their home within its walls.

CHAPTER III

THE TRIUMPHANT BEAST

THE public skating rink on the Castle Pond which was whole-heartedly thrown open to every one without regard to class distinction, was held in very low esteem by the Cheruskans.

Any one who considered himself anybody saw to it that the skating association which conducted a highly restricted rink on the other side of the bridge, sent him a formal invitation to make use of it unless he preferred to become a paying member, for to whisk about among shop girls and store clerks was beneath the dignity of a Cheruscan and could only be tolerated if he left his cap and ribbon at home and hid his exalted status in vulgar civilian clothes.

Now it happened to be Fritz Kühne's fate to see Helena Schimmelpfennig execute a skillful semi-circle as she glided along the plebeian enclosure below just as he was crossing the Castle Bridge in full regalia on a January afternoon.

He recognized her at once in spite of the gray krimmer béret and the glossy black rabbit collar that encircled her slim young neck quite to the ears. And mastering a heart palpitation, he called to her in

the most informal manner and shouted a merry greeting in a way his *mentor* would never have tolerated.

She stopped at once. Her eyes lighted up. The red in her cheeks turned nearly crimson and her muff which did not match either her *béret* or her collar but which more closely resembled a shaggy foot warmer, gave him an answering sign.

After that, neither of them knew what to do, for to carry on a conversation from above to below and vice versa was a defiance of convention that neither of them could risk. So he resorted to a plan that was just as socially impossible. He dashed back to the end of the bridge, ran down the stairs and after he had bought a ticket, bravely entered the forbidden precincts.

She stood and waited for him with artless joy.

"Wouldn't you like to rent a pair of skates?" she asked as she offered him her right hand through what passed for a muff. "We could do such pretty fancy figures together."

Now he was in a jam if he ever was. Obviously, she did not have the slightest idea of the low social status of the place where she was amusing herself. He could not bring himself to hurt her, neither could he stay. How easily he might be discovered among the rabble by a fraternity brother crossing the bridge! So he mustered up courage and said, "I should like to make a counterproposition—unstrap your skates

and let's take a walk together. You can skate here at any time, but we never meet each other."

And she, who at first had seemed bewildered and startled by his request, kneeled down and silently loosened the straps.

"You are right," she said, rising to her feet. "One can't talk down here anyway; one is always being pushed or is pushing others."

Then she knocked the snow off her skates and preceded him up the slippery steps.

Twilight descended and here and there a lamp already flickered.

"Where shall we go?" she asked.

"It's all the same to me," he answered, "but let's go where there are fewer people."

The truth of the matter was that he was afraid of being teased by his friends. Even though he would have resented so much as a breath of doubt about her standing, he had to admit that she did not have the appearance of a young lady of distinction and gossip-inducing walks with schoolgirls and seamstresses were not well thought of by the inner circle of the rough Cheruskans.

They walked and walked and scarcely knew where. They only noticed that the streets grew darker and that they met people more and more infrequently.

"You know the Professor gave me permission to come again," he said, breaking the silence, "and I often thought of doing so, but when it came right

down to it, I couldn't bring myself to risk it; for he may just have said it out of politeness and if I take him at his word, he may throw me out."

But she knew better.

"You're very much mistaken," she cried thoroughly wrought up; "more than once he has said to Mamma, 'I see the young Cheruscan who once came to see me at my lectures all the time. I don't believe he's missed a single one, yet he has never come here since, although I made a point of asking him.'"

He beamed.

"Had I had any inkling of such a thing," he cried, "I would have camped on his doorstep and I would always have seen to it that he would have been out as on that day; then I could have waited with you and we should have become good friends quickly."

"It seems to me that we are that anyway," she answered, "otherwise, why should I be walking with you in pitch darkness?"

"I hope you are not afraid," he said.

"Why should I be," she laughed, "when I have such a brave knight? But seriously, I, too, sometimes wished that you would come again, for we understood each other so well, particularly in matters that concerned the Professor. I can't talk about him to any one, not even to Mamma, for she always says, 'Run along now, that's nothing for you.'"

"In other words, I am, in a sense, to take Mother's place?" he teased.

That made her angry. "Shame on you," she said. "If you're going to be like that, I would have done better not to have taken off my skates."

Just then she noticed that they had wandered into an entirely desolate section.

She walked next to him skirting the fortress wall, not a house in sight and a chilly winter wind blowing through the peep-holes—or were they embrasures?—in the somber brick wall.

Every time its blast struck her, she shook with chills.

Fritz noticed it and said, "We had better go somewhere else."

But neither of them attempted to leave the path. They walked along the dark wall as if by compulsion.

"Let's imagine that it is spring," he said, "and that back of this there are nothing but green meadows and blossoming shrubbery. Wouldn't that be nice?"

"And the blackbirds would sing," she said, taking up the thread, "and the sunset sky would peep in through these holes. Ah! yes, that would be nice."

"And then we should go for a long walk," he continued, "right into the midst of the green fields. Would you come along?"

"I'd like to all right," she replied hesitatingly, "but I don't know whether I could stay away from home that long—on account of Mamma and also—" She stopped short.

"Are you thinking of the Professor?" he asked a little dejectedly.

"Of course I am," she pouted.

"But if he never needs you?"

"Oh, sometimes he needs me all right, especially when Mamma isn't at home; besides the spring of the year is his busiest time. During that time he has often said, 'I do as much now as in the other three-quarters of the year put together,' and then, too, he always needs some one near by to look after him."

"What is he working at now?" asked Fritz.

"That is something one never knows," she answered. "He never speaks of it and he locks up his manuscript, but whenever he leaves his closet door open, one can see stacks and stacks of written sheets. Printed, I am sure they would make thick volumes."

"That's strange," said Fritz, "he's had next to nothing published."

"I know, I know," she cried eagerly, "and his fellow professors comment a great deal upon it. He's known it already for some time, and once he said scornfully, 'Any one who doesn't add his quota to the dung-heap is an object of contempt in the eyes of every bovine creature.'"

A fresh gust of wind blew through a hole in the wall as they passed.

"But now we really must leave this abominable wall," he said, sliding down the gently sloping embankment. And she followed him willingly.

All around them the gas lamps, phantom-like and curtained with fog, flickered through the dark, thickly growing bushes. In the distance the square outlines of window panes shimmered fitfully and at their feet the snow crunched and glistened.

"Let's turn back," she cried.

He looked searchingly around him. "If we keep going we'll get into a populated district more quickly," he said, and as she seemed to hesitate, "or don't you feel safe with me any longer?"

She reassured him emphatically.

"If that is true," he went on, "you will also tell me to-day that which you lacked faith in me to say on that other occasion."

She reflected, then asked him what it could possibly have been.

"Well—about the Professor—all the things you heard through the wall."

She was visibly startled and did not answer.

"Can't you bring yourself to it yet?" he goaded her on.

She continued to keep silent; finally, when he went on pressing her for information, she decided to give him an answer. "I can't do it. I really can't do it. Not only on his account, also because I—no, it's impossible. Please don't ask me about it any more. It just can't be done."

Now it was he who got angry and more seriously so than she had been before.

"If you are going to act like that," he said, "then I know how little you think of me and that there can never be any friendship between us."

"And if you are going to keep on tormenting me this way," she said, "I am going to walk on the other side of the street."

"As you please," he said; "this section appears to be quite densely settled, so you really don't need me any longer."

Then she felt a little ashamed and continued to walk close by his side.

In the end it was he who yielded.

"Very well then," he said, "if you want to be so secretive, there's nothing I can do about it."

"Get to know him better first," she pleaded, "so that you will never be able to misunderstand him; so that you will realize how serious-minded he is, and how big. Then, perhaps, I won't be on the defensive any more. How would it be if you went to see him right now?" she suggested with sudden inspiration. "He is surely at home to-day and if he shouldn't have any time for you just at this moment, you could spend a little more time with us."

There was nothing to be said against it and though his breath came faster at the thought that in a very few minutes he would find himself looking that much admired and frequently feared man in the eyes, he followed her obediently through streets swarming with people and arrived at the dimly lighted

house hoping to find the windows, behind which *he* lived, in darkness.

But just those very windows were brightly illuminated.

Now it would have been cowardice to turn back; therefore he walked up the stairs with her and went into the living room where her mother fixed her melancholy eyes upon him in utter surprise from behind her sewing machine.

"I met Mr. Kühne at the skating pond and since he was coming to see the Professor anyway, he came right along with me." She said it with so much conviction that even he became almost convinced of the truth of this lie.

And then she asked, "Do you want to call him or shall I?"

"I will do it," said her mother, gathering up the piece of linen that was bulging in front of her.

And so they were alone again for a moment.

"Perhaps you will come again later and tell me how it was," Helena said quickly.

"If it can be managed," he reflected, for he stood in great awe of that solemn mother.

But almost immediately he hit upon a helpful idea. "I'll forget my cap," he said. And in the laughter that both stifled, his sudden dread of the impending interview vanished.

The Professor sat behind his lamp, the shade of which, on the side towards him, was covered with a

sheet of newspaper, obviously for the purpose of shielding his eyes.

He stood up and extended a languid hand in Fritz's direction.

"You were a long time in coming, Mr.—Mr.—what is your name?"

"Kühne."

"Thank you." He leaned over the writing desk and made a note in pencil.

There was no longer the faintest trace of bashfulness or embarrassment in Fritz's soul, only a radiant spirit because he was still so unsophisticated and so entirely without responsibility.

"First of all, Professor," he said frankly, "I did not know when it would be convenient for you to have me call again—and secondly, I stood in such terrific awe of you, that I would never have had the courage to come again of my own accord."

"Who persuaded you then to come to-day?" he said, smiling. It was a gentle, indulgent, almost tender smile. One was almost moved at the sight of it.

"I met the daughter of your landlady, Professor, and she told me that you had spoken of me."

"How do you happen to know my landlady's daughter?"

"Because the last time I was here I waited over there a long time."

"And out of that chance meeting a further relationship developed?"

"Yes, Professor."

The Professor frowned.

"I never belonged to a fraternity," he said, motioning him to a chair, "I had neither the time nor the money for it, but I am fully aware of your attitude toward the other sex. You separate all women with whom you come into contact into two classes: the first, those you consider your social equals, fraternity sisters, daughters of professors and ladies in general—they are sacred to you. And the second, girls of the lower class, daughters of middle-class homes and the like, those you consider fair game. I expect you to consider this child as belonging to the first class."

Fritz felt a wave of embarrassment surge through him. The shame of it, that he should have felt it necessary to express such a doubt! He stood up, and said in a manner suitable to the occasion, "You have my word of honor on that score."

"That's settled," said the Professor, "don't let's talk about it any more. It pleased me very much to see you attending both of my courses so regularly. I thought you would come to the desk to have your registration signed."

"Registrations and cancellations are always handled for us by the beadle," Fritz answered, and accompanied the remark with a nonchalant expres-

sion designed to indicate how trivial he deemed the matter under discussion.

"Oh, yes, you are big guns, you fraternity men," said the Professor, "and it is disgraceful of us teachers to take you at your own valuation. Later on, when you join the rank and file, life will, unfortunately, make you feel small enough."

"I don't believe that, Professor," Fritz answered with increasing assurance. "We learn to master life; therefore, we manage to win through any odds, let come what may."

"I see your opinion of yourself has bettered itself considerably," he said with his customary smile. "My advice to you to remain in the fraternity quite evidently was correct. But why, I should like to ask you, do so many fraternity men go hopelessly to the dogs?"

Fritz felt a stitch through his heart. What the Professor had said was undeniable. Any number of promising fraternity members went completely to pieces. For what reason? What was the sinister influence that disturbed the tranquillity of these bold and pleasure-loving demigods?

He stammered something about frivolity and excess energy and lack of self-control and things that one says at such times.

"Don't bother," said the Professor, interrupting him, "these times have created you because they needed your surplus energy. You will be swept

aside again just as quickly. You are playing more daringly with the *bestia trionfante* than others have done, and once it has you by the throat, you are finished."

Fritz was all ears. That easily translated word was new to him, but it must have been derived from a valuable source; otherwise the Professor would not have used it.

The Professor read the thirst for knowledge in his eyes.

"Do you remember my recent reference to Giordano Bruno?"

Of course he remembered. His heart had beat faster at the mere mention of his name, for the martyr to freedom of the soul who had not been afraid to burn at the stake for his convictions, had invaded his dreams ever since his last year at school.

"This very man," the Professor continued, "who had as problematic a nature as any tramp, which in reality he was, wrote a book on the driving out of the triumphant beast. You would find its contents fairly unpalatable, otherwise I should tell you to get it from the library. But that is neither here nor there. The problem it entails is what interests us at the moment and it is a problem that concerns us all. Every one of us wages his battle with the triumphant beast whether it be you, or I, or St. Augustine or St. Anthony. To one it is gluttony, to another, privation, to still another, brute force, and to even

another, cowardice. And it has a thousand names more. To chain this triumphant beast and to make of it a household pet, that is a problem, my dear friend, which we cannot shirk. You may think that by taking refuge behind corresponding virtues, you can escape from this monster, but you will find that one fine day it will collar you. So on with the sport! Only it isn't a game with which to trifle and we are all of us only too prone to do just that thing."

The Professor stopped. He had turned halfway round to the table in his swivel chair and busied himself with something that lay before him that Fritz was not able to distinguish. The glare of the lamp, from which he had torn its protecting shade, fell mercilessly on his haggard features and his eyes gleamed compellingly out of the heavily shadowed hollows that surrounded them.

A dull sense of futility assailed Fritz's soul and held it captive. It was not the Professor whose intellect soared to heights far above his mental reach who was responsible for this feeling. It seemed to him as if some fate were creeping out of dark recesses and showing its dragon's teeth. A fate that was in store for this other man, as it was for him. Yes, even more so for the former, for he himself was not yet ready for the clutches of any fate.

He pulled himself together and asked, "What was it Giordano Bruno hoped to accomplish with his book?"

The Professor laughed quietly, if a little sardonically, almost to himself.

"What did he want to accomplish? Do any of us always know what we hope our future books will accomplish? He went about weaving day-dreams. That former monk wanted to purge his soul of his grudge against Christendom by writing it for every one to see . . . What eventually came of it was insufficiency, identically the same insufficiency from which we suffer when we deem ourselves wondrously wise and believe ourselves capable of ascertaining by means of weighings the properties of the rocks that any stupid volcano ejects. For that reason the world has only progressed under the domination of stupidity, if there is such a thing as progress . . . To be a wretched mental pauper like Luther—that insures one's success. Or a narrow-minded Junker like Bismarck, then one certainly has lived for something . . . not to mention the greatest one of all, the one whose influence extends throughout the world."

Fritz felt as if he were a little boy again and the class teacher had rapped him over the ears with his copy book. Whom he meant by the "greatest," the "most influential" he did not even dare to ask. But to shatter, in a single breath, the two idols of his youth, to whom he had been taught to give his unquestioned loyalty, how could one reason that out, how justify it?

The Professor saw his distress and tried to calm him.

"I don't want to lead your Prussian-Protestant conscience astray," he said, "perhaps one day you will reach all of these conclusions of your own accord. For the present ignore them. . . . And I should also like to retract my criticism of the Italian, for when all is said and done, you cannot expect any philosopher to do more than to die for his convictions What actually drove him to the stake has never really been cleared up It would have been such a simple matter for him to have escaped it—a slight retraction such as was made by Galileo and the others, and he would have been set free. But—he no longer cared No, no—he—did not—want—to—go on."

The Professor had turned half away from him toward the wall. His cheeks became even more wan, more hollow. The lines in his forehead deepened, and his blazing eyes stared into space as if they were seeing visions.

"Giordano Bruno may have looked like that," thought Fritz.

And the Professor continued, "One can readily understand such a condition. For years, for half of his life in fact, he had baffled and deceived; for no one knew what he actually thought He invariably used to placate them and worm his way out in such a way that even the bloodhounds of the In-

quisition did not dare to lay a hand on him . . . Until finally disgust at this mental filth seized him and he came to the conclusion that only through fire could he be cleansed . . . That one can readily understand. Oh, yes—one—can—understand that.”

He had sunk down in his chair. His half-open mouth exposed his teeth which he had snapped together in his resentment and he stared into space with a yearning so intense that one felt he wished nothing nobler, nothing more magnificent for himself than a death by fire.

Fritz had the feeling that he had been entirely forgotten. He arose, hesitatingly. The Professor did not stir. For a moment he was undecided as to whether he should say good-by or creep quietly out of the door. But the latter seemed such bad taste and so utterly absurd.

He was still thinking of an appropriate word when the Professor extended a limp icy hand in his direction.

And that was his dismissal.

He felt so shaken that when he reached the room where mother and daughter were waiting, filled with curiosity, he made no attempt to sit down and stay. He reached for his cap in silence, bowed to the mother, threw Helena an apologetic look and hurried downstairs.

As he ran along the street, he kept repeating to

himself, "What has happened to me? What has come over me?"

A vague sense of having witnessed a tragedy possessed him—a tragedy which, hidden from human eyes and hardly known even to the man who lived it, was stubbornly and agonizingly pursuing its fatal course.

And yet ordinarily everything betokened calmness, mirth, and self-control.

CHAPTER IV

CAROUSING BY NIGHT

THE regular meeting had been over for some time. It was after twelve o'clock and the clubroom of the Cheruskans was gradually becoming empty. Several victims of beer jags were being cautiously handled lest, on waking, they should start a fight; and having been divested of their insignia so as not to compromise the fraternity in the street, they were now being prepared for homeward transportation by the addition of hats and coats.

"Shrewmouse," who had catarrh of the stomach as a result of excessive drinking, and for that reason was not able to stand much, had slunk quietly away, and was therefore not available for any further deeds of heroism. But there were still "Claffey," that jolly hail-fellow-well-met, and "Nootch-Nootch," who held the record for beer-swilling and who could put away his twenty steins with no more effect than if they had been lemonade, and "Genteel" Mr. Peter-eit who, because of his punctilious demeanor, had not yet acquired a nickname.

They all sat ready for anything, hoping for a fitting culmination to the evening's activities.

Even Fritz Kühne, who, after creditably complet-

ing his schedule of probationer's duels, had recently been granted full rank as a brother, did not show the slightest effects of the heavy drinking bout. His fresh scars shone in angry brilliance, but he sat erect, taking a conscious pride in his irreproachable carriage.

Fritz Kühne, lovingly nicknamed "Fritzie," was beginning to be regarded as one of the hopes of the fraternity. Not only because in him the Cherusicans had acquired a first-class swordsman, but because, through his dash and his polished manners, he had made a good impression.

Of course he had had an occasional fall from grace, unavoidable in a freshman, which, after an appropriate censure, they were glad to overlook. For instance, he had been seen one evening in full regalia on the plebeian side of the skating rink. They did not even resent his tendency to frequently launch into tirades on the rights of man, individualism and other similar nonsense, for those are notions that time eliminates. What was more serious was that he became possessed of a terrific academic zeal in regard to the attendance of lectures and even attempted to postpone a duel that was already on the calendar because it interfered with a lecture on philosophy. What did a future lawyer want with philosophy? However, the fact that in this very duel he had vanquished his opponent brilliantly, and in a subsequent one as well, was, naturally, in a

measure, a vindication. But it was too bad just the same that such eccentricities should assert themselves. However, one had to reckon with him on account of the two successive victories.

"Listen, Fritzie," said "Claffey," "since you're still chipper long past bedtime and don't behave in general like the shabby novice that by rights you are . . ."

"One more sound and I'll challenge you to a beer-duel," Fritz threatened.

"Don't bother," "Claffey" pacified genially, "if you are still thirsty, get 'Nootch-Nootch' to join you. He'll drink you under the table so quickly and so genially that you'll just have time enough to mistake your beer mug for a bed chamber."

"At your service," invited "Nootch-Nootch." "I'm always ready for mischief."

But there was no sense in getting mixed up with him, so Fritz left things as they were.

"Claffey" continued, "You see, we mean it well with you, my son, and we intend to initiate you into some of the secrets of this capital which have been stringently withheld from you novices because of your possible inability to keep your poise. So take off your cap and ribbon, deck yourself out in *miserable mufti* and let's go!"

Each one had a hat hanging in the closet and now, no matter what might happen, the honor of the fraternity was safeguarded.

The streets were dark and empty. Only here and there lights in the windows of dives that were still open glittered hospitably. Every once in a while a more or less intoxicated night reveler went whistling on his way.

Some members of a high-school fraternity passed by wearing their colors, of course, and twirling their canes in the night air.

They recognized one another and carefully avoided each other in passing. With the former it was the natural desire to avoid jostling, while with the Cheruskans, on the other hand, it was the feeling that they would be lowering themselves and doing such people too much honor by coming into close contact with them.

They stopped at a sailors' tavern on Wharf Street from which drunken bawling rang out. "If you happen to have a hankering after excitement," said "Claffey," "sailors will reward you with ample subject matter."

"I've heard these fellows pull a knife at the slightest provocation," Fritz remarked.

"That is likely to happen," "Nootch-Nootch" remarked condescendingly, "but they are much too drunk to handle them effectively."

"Besides which," added the "Genteel" Mr. Peter-eit, "we'll completely disarm them with our civility."

So they went in.

A challenging shout greeted them. The smoke

was so thick one could have cut it with a knife. Round, red faces with eyes that spit fire emerged from the bluish-gray haze.

"What are you doing here, you silly student boys?" voices strident and hoarse with liquor shrieked at them.

At which "Genteel" Mr. Petereit went into action. He lifted his hat with a sweeping gesture, made an equally exaggerated bow and spoke to them in a voice he might have used in addressing an assembly of officers of the Royal Guards. "If the gentlemen will be kind enough to extend the hospitality of their table to us for a little while, we shall be eternally grateful."

A silence ensued for they did not know how to cope with this kind of conversation.

"If it comes to that, why not?" one of them finally said, and moved to one side. Other chairs were shoved around and eventually all four of them found themselves sitting at the crowded table.

Mr. Petereit, always ceremonious, undertook to introduce himself to his table companions. "My name is Peekerinsky," he said, "*abstinentiæ onaniæque*."

The other two gave their nicknames but Fritz contented himself with a nod. He felt uneasy. As soon as these people realized that they were being severely ridiculed, a fist fight must follow as a mat-

ter of course. But for the time being, they seemed to be completely overwhelmed by the situation.

There were five or six of them, all young, robust, weather-beaten, and turned out in their best. Some of them in sailors' caps with their chests bare and others in clean holiday clothes with red silk bandannas and war decorations in their buttonholes.

They completely filled the roomy sofa table over which a hanging lamp was smoking. The rest of the room was empty except for a lone guest with long ash-blond hair and round blue spectacles who sat next to the stove mulling over his toddy and taking no apparent interest in what was going on around him.

The Cheruskans also ordered toddies which the burly proprietor, a typical bouncer, pushed in front of them almost before they spoke, at the same time demanding his cash.

The others drank a clear white corn or plum whiskey which they sweetened with bits of rock candy. Before they had quite come to a true realization of the situation, "Claffey" took charge. "Silence," he commanded. "We will now sing that lovely ditty, 'To the Court of Law.'"

And he began in his seasoned harsh voice:

To the Court of Law let's be on our way
To face the Judge who there holds sway.
Then right or wrong, let come what may
To the holiest vows we'll swear this day.

"To the holiest vows we'll swear this day," the chorus repeated timidly, and "Claffey" continued:

We're on to every single trick,
What's more we think for we're not thick,
We swear to everything in sight
And sometimes err by swearing right.

Should facts belie the oaths we've sworn
Our consciences won't let us mourn.
Bring on your oaths and there won't be
One which we would not swear with glee.

'And if mishap should come one day
Our youthful locks would not turn gray,
For then the state, on kindness bent
Would give us two years' board and rent.

Then come with me to the Court of Law
And raise on high that good right paw;
For only then there'll be no doubt
That you're a pal and first-class scout.

"That you're a pal and first-class scout," rang jubilantly through the room. And even the silent man next to the stove laughed to himself until his body rocked visibly back and forth.

Slowly the humor of the doggerel penetrated the dull sensibilities of the seamen and the Cheruskans could, without flattering themselves, consider the victory theirs.

"More, more, more," howled several voices. "Claffey," who knew a dozen or more such songs by

heart, sang a stanza of "The Jolly Rabbit-Hutch" and then one about "The Pious Fire Worshiper," the chorus of which was:

Many deplore the condition
That matches are scarce and so dear;
But I carry my own ignition,
So my girl friends have nothing to fear.

From then on, they became for a time one heart and one soul. They even linked arms and rocked their bodies in unison as if they had known each other since the beginning of time. But this happy state of affairs was short-lived.

One of the seamen whose tenderness toward the newcomers knew no bound, suggested that, as a proof of their good faith, they should share drinks, and shoved his unappetizing whiskey glass toward Mr. Petereit, who was his neighbor. And when Mr. Petereit declined to drink out of it, the trouble began.

Considering themselves insulted, they sprang angrily to their feet.

Any man who didn't want to drink with them was a son of a bitch and unless they hoisted the *blue peter* and made a quick getaway, they'd knock their blocks off. They kept on muttering unintelligible but obviously evil threats until the innkeeper wedged his bare muscular arms between the two factions in a futile attempt to separate them.

"Gangway, boss!"—"Clear the deck!" was the

talk, and while there were no knives pulled, several brass-knuckles made their ominous appearance.

A catastrophe seemed unavoidable when suddenly a strange, high-pitched voice made itself heard through the noise. The quiet man in the blue spectacles who was sitting next to the stove had risen and stood behind them.

"Young gentlemen," he said, "you mustn't deny their request. These brave sailors are perfectly right. If one isn't willing to drink with them according to their lights, they suspect that you don't hold them in the esteem to which they are entitled. Look at me. I have not had the honor of sitting at their table, yet I would do what they asked without a moment's hesitation."

After which, he pushed past the Cheruskans, picked up one of the thick whiskey glasses that stood on the table and saying, "Here's to you, gentlemen," emptied it at a single gulp, swallowing even the bits of rock candy.

"Hurrah, good for you!" they yelled, and three or four horny hands were extended in his direction.

Fritz had already pricked up his ears at his very first words. He was sure that he knew the voice and as the frail, slender hand, white and opalescent, reached for the whiskey tumbler, he recognized that too.

Frightened, he turned around.

The face with its sparsely bearded chin and its long strands of hair which fell over the forehead in two-inch bangs nearly down to the blue spectacles, seemed strange to him, altogether strange.

But just then, close to his ear, he heard these words spoken with whispered emphasis:

"Don't give me away; keep your mouth shut!"

From that time on there was no further room for doubt. He stepped quickly to one side and gave his seat to the Professor.

The latter vigorously shook the hands which were stretched whole-heartedly towards him and from which the brass-knuckles had speedily disappeared, and then continued: "On the other hand, my worthy seamen, you must take into consideration that we landlubbers also have our customs, inferior though they may unfortunately be, with which you should be indulgent. And so I would suggest that we find the center of gravity between these two forces that alternately attract and repel each other, so to speak. I make myself clear, do I not?"

"Sure you do, you're right, you do," they sang out enthusiastically.

"And to achieve our purpose, let us mix a tasty, yet what you might call a thoroughly neutral, drink, let's say a stiff punch of rum and port. How do you feel about it?"

"Fine, first rate," was heard on all sides.

"Then we'll bury the hatchet and as a token

thereof we'll all drink a toast to our brotherliness, to which as fellow men we are all pledged as it is. That would be the thing, wouldn't it?"

"Hurrah, hurrah—great idea," bellowed the sailors.

The Cheruskans were less enthusiastic. For each one wondered simultaneously whether such behavior was in keeping with his position and speculated as to what the fraternity would say if they knew.

But they were not wearing their colors, so there was no need to worry over the consequences. So they, too, consented good-naturedly and the new bond of friendship was sealed.

When they broke up after a strenuous sitting, toward three in the morning, each of the Cheruskans had a drunken sailor leaning on his arm who made every effort to give his newly acquired brother a parting kiss. The Professor in fact had two hanging on to him who tried in thick tones to point out that it wasn't too late for him to follow the sea and that since he knew such a deuce of a lot about sea-craft, he could become a full-fledged sailor in hardly any time at all.

He, in turn, called their attention to his glasses which he said would prevent him from getting into the service, which explanation finally satisfied them.

He brought them up the gangplank; first the one and then the other and when the watch took them in charge, they cried bitterly.

Fritz remained near the Professor the entire time in anxious astonishment. True enough, he was fuddled, but not to such an extent as not to realize the grotesqueness of being associated with him in such surroundings as these.

His admired, worshiped teacher, whom he had held in such overpowering respect that he had hardly dared to approach him, in the rôle of drinking companion and participant in every rowdyism, in fact even acting as ringleader! If any one had prophesied such a thing even to-day he would certainly have branded even the harboring of such a thought as blasphemy.

Now that the sailors had disappeared, they stood on the dock, all four of them opposite the stranger and "Nootch-Nootch," who was still cold sober, as was to be expected, began to speak: "Most honored brother, we are certainly——"

"Less formality," yelled "Claffey," whose jag had taken a fraternizing turn.

"Very well, then," the former continued, "we owe you a debt of gratitude for helping us out of a nasty situation by your presence of mind, and since you have, in a measure, become our leader, I ask you, wringing my hands in supplication, 'What are we to do with the rest of the afternoon?'"

"That's a simple matter," "Genteel" Mr. Petereit answered in his stead. "We dedicate ourselves to the ladies."

"Good enough," "Claffey" assented. "On to Valhalla!"

Fritz looked eagerly toward the Professor who, to all outward appearances, still retained his smiling tranquillity but who, on closer inspection, was just as drunk as the rest of them, only that his intoxication took a different form, a more eloquent, more controlled and less ecstatic trend.

"Valhalla, you say?" he asked. "What lucky fellows you are to be able to put the brothel on a par with heaven! As for me, were I to draw a picture in my mind's eye of the delights of paradise, it would be a June night, a haystack in a meadow at twilight and a sturdy-legged servant girl burying herself in it with me. She might have a pug nose and be pock-marked for that matter and it would only establish a closer bond between us."

"And I wish myself a blue silk comforter and the Queen of Italy underneath it," said Mr. Petereit, whereupon the rest of them naturally scoffed at his elegant tastes.

"I can't offer you a queen," said the Professor, "but I do know a madonna I will put at your disposal if she isn't already showing some one else the way to the kingdom of heaven."

The idea met with a great amount of enthusiasm; so the little group led by the Professor moved on. Not in the direction of that mysteriously celebrated little alley which turns off across from Steindamm

Church toward the clinics and which to-day, having become thoroughly harmless, is known by the innocuous name of St. Nicholas Street, but giving it wide berth they went toward the Haymarket where, for blocks around, simple townspeople resided.

The Professor stopped in front of an arched entrance door.

"By day this is a cigar store," he said, calling their attention to the lowered rolling shutters which completely covered a broad window that reached to the street level; "it is only at night that the pursuit of the higher arts begins."

And he knocked on the panel of the door three times with the head of his cane after the manner peculiar to the place. It was some little time before the key turned in the door. A dignified woman scantily clad in a white nightcap and a blue knitted petticoat peered cautiously through the crack in the door.

"For Heaven's sake," she whispered, "my girls are asleep long ago. We are a reputable house. You gentlemen should know that."

But "Nootch-Nootch," who could always be relied upon to take a quiet and impressive hold on any matter that required enterprise, had pushed his foot between the door and the frame, and without further discussion they walked, one behind another, up a stairway which, beginning only a few steps away, led to the second floor.

The Professor, who was finding his way around the upper floor in the pitch darkness without any difficulty, opened the door of an equally unilluminated room from which an oppressive aroma of patchouli and Turkish tobacco emanated.

The estimable lady brought up the rear lamenting that they should let the poor things have their night's rest, and, besides, the baker would be opening up soon and if, in leaving, they were seen, it would reflect on the reputation of the house.

But all the while she bustled about lighting the table lamp and with great ceremony laid a heavily thumb-marked slip which bore the caption, "Wine List," before them.

Then she slunk out.

Fritz Kühne, who was becoming more embarrassed every minute by the Professor's presence in such a place, just about managed to look around him.

He saw a set of red-flowered, upholstered furniture and a low chaise-longue with a white, long-haired fur rug in front of it. He saw chromos with gallant knights and virtuous ladies depicted on them. And to give the *genius loci* its due, a Venus surrounded by cupids in the act of modestly covering her thighs with a kind of blanket of clouds. Ash trays of all kinds and shapes were scattered through the room and boxes of dice were temptingly interspersed among them.

The Professor had thrown himself into a sofa

corner and as nearly as one could make out behind his blue spectacles, he was looking with a searching smile from one to another. He glanced appraisingly at Fritz too, from time to time, but since those few whispered words exchanged with him in the sailors' tavern, he had not given him the smallest intimation that there was a bond existing between them.

The others who were lounging in the various easy-chairs began to get impatient.

"What's keeping your famous madonna?" Mr. Petereit asked reproachfully, and "Claffey" added, "If it takes much longer, I'd rather go on a flea-hunt."

The Professor puffed at an empty cigarette holder and let them rave.

"Now, certainly, he'll have to take some notice of me," Fritz thought, but nothing of the kind happened. On the contrary, to the unsuspecting it must have appeared that the Professor, thinking him the youngest and most immature, was overlooking him intentionally.

Finally the door that led to the various gates to paradise opened and three girls shuffled in, still dazed with sleep and utterly jaded.

The first, and as it seemed the most pretentious and most popular, appeared in a long, lace-trimmed boudoir coat from underneath which light blue silk stockings showed themselves. She wore her red hair piled high on her head and from her face, which was

transparently white and lightly freckled, two tired heavily lashed eyes glowed darkly.

The second, a small, voluptuous brunette, wore a Turkish dressing gown and her hooked nose and bushy, closely set eyebrows seemed to label her as some child of an eastern ghetto who had been swept into these surroundings by the worldwide system of white slavery.

The third, the least conspicuous and less dressed up for the occasion than any of the others, wore a short white bed jacket and a matching petticoat, her slender shapely legs encased in black woolen stockings.

But she was the one; she must have been the one on whose account all of them had come there.

She had a calm, noble countenance with blue eyes dimmed by weariness and dainty eyebrows arching above them; blond, slightly waved hair that was drawn smoothly over her ears, a pale soft mouth whose upturned corners gave the impression of a good-natured smile, a body that was slender and beautifully proportioned and breasts that were delicate and round; all in all, a sweet and pathetic picture of defenseless womanhood which, in mockery of human fate, was being brutally sacrificed in these surroundings.

Fritz felt his heart bound at the sight of her. Whether because of compassion or out of longing for her or his sister, of whom she reminded him but

who, unlike her, had not fallen into the mire, he did not know. He could not explain it to himself. He only knew one thing. "This is she and I must leave her to some one else."

"Well, have I said too much?" he heard the Professor say.

Then there was a cry, a tiny warm cry of delight and she, on whom all eyes were turned, threw her arms around the Professor's neck.

"Oh, you—you," was all she said, and again and again, "Oh, you—you."

He had gotten up and was caressing her; that soft, almost tender smile that one so rarely saw stole over his face.

And then she returned his caresses, at first scarcely finding the courage to raise her hands—those long, reddened, neglected hands—to his face and cautiously stroked his bearded chin. "She knows the beard is false," thought Fritz, and finally, when the Professor had seated himself on the lounge, she touched his shoulders ever so lightly like one who is not quite sure of her ground.

The other two girls had tried vainly to attract attention to themselves. Only when the hostess, who had in the meantime covered her ample figure with a brocade kimono, had ordered them by secret signs to no longer withhold the wine cards from the guests, did they become more energetic in their attentions.

And then "Nootch-Nootch" and Mr. Petereit awoke to the fact that they, too, had their merits.

The wine, a cloyingly sweet Mediterranean vintage, and possibly, as the Professor said, the only drinkable one the establishment had to offer, shone, pale red, through the thick unbreakable glasses. The iron stove which the hostess had freshly lighted sent warm heat waves into the thoroughly chilled room. The Professor's friend had settled down within their range on the white fur rug, leaned her head against his knees, and stroked his left hand which caressingly encircled her delicately shaped neck.

A soothing expression of beatific peace lay upon the regular, almost too regular features which were glorified by the rosy glow of the flames. She smiled gently, her lids half closed.

"Now she is in truth the Madonna," thought Fritz, who could not take his eyes off her.

The other two couples, who, in the meantime had reached an understanding, now started to disappear and the hostess solicitously showed them the way.

The Professor, Fritz and "Claffey" remained alone with the girl whom the others would not have dared to approach, for prior rights were held sacred.

"Well, my worthy brothers," he began, "what have you to say about such a situation?"

"Let us first hear your point of view," answered

"Claffey." "You are the lucky possessor and for that reason have the priority."

"What is viewpoint?" he laughed. "Only the stupid have a viewpoint with particular emphasis on *one* special viewpoint. Intelligent people have at least two which they can constantly juggle back and forth and if they have no luck, they ultimately land on the dung-heap with them."

"What do you mean, dung-heap?" asked "Claffey."

"By dung-heap, I mean the pedestal on which those who are true to their convictions place that one, who unlike themselves, is not obtuse enough to see things from only one angle."

"But I think that a man without convictions . . ."

"Belongs on the dung-heap, that's what I said."

"If I hadn't loaded myself up with so much liquor," "Claffey," who was usually quick to grasp an idea, interjected, "I'd have no trouble handling you, sophistry and all, but at four in the morning, and in a brothel . . ."

"Why not?" laughed the Professor. "The creative act is always a sacred business; why not create ideas?"

"Then make yourself clear, brother, and fellow sot. Will you hold a brief for the man who has no principles?"

The Professor gently drew away his hand, which

was on the girl's neck. Her head was pillowed on his lap and overpowered by the warmth and comfort, she was drowsily fighting sleep. He sipped at his glass, and leaning against the back of the couch, he said, "We have a philosopher in Germany, a man who is a pretty sound thinker as a rule, who wrote a book called 'The Point of View by Day as Opposed to the Point of View by Night.' I'll just avail myself of that title here, but only of the title, for its contents are Christian drivel."

"He did identically the same thing in the case of Giordano Bruno," thought Fritz.

"You see, everything on earth has its daytime point of view and another by night. At four in the morning in a brothel one thinks along other lines than one does at four in the afternoon at a family tea; yet one has as much in its favor as the other."

"Claffey" doubtingly said, "Well, well!"

"I will try to convince you," the Professor continued. "Take woman, for instance! Yes, let us say, woman. This concept comprises an entire complex of benevolent and constructive ideas and emotions: Virtue, fidelity, sacrifice, comradeship, mother-love, sisterly devotion . . . 'The woman-soul leadeth us upward and on.' . . . 'If thou wouldst fain determine what is fitting address thyself to noble womanhood,' and the like . . . Passing beyond the borders of conventionality, we have: Inspiration, the charm of heaven-sent beauty, the fullness of life, heroic

playing with fire, and the devil only knows what else . . . That is the daytime point of view. And now for the nocturnal viewpoint, embodied by the prostitute!"

The girl, who had fallen asleep, started up in fright and looked at him with horror-stricken eyes. That familiar epithet had stung her even in her dreams.

He laid a kindly hand on her forehead and said, "Sleep on, child, I did not mean you."

And she, quickly reassured, obediently assumed her place again. Her half-exposed young breasts rose and fell once more in agreeable consciousness of his proximity.

"I will avoid the word," he continued, "to spare her feelings. You can supply it where required. She is a benefactor, she is a redeemer, just like the other. Without her we would be the sport of dissolute desire and even more dissolute gratification. Peace of mind in work. Concentration. Self-reliance. Certainty of goal. Freedom from the chains of passion and from premature marriage ties. And above all, scorn, scorn, scorn for petty, silly flirtation. All these things are given to us by—let us say euphemistically, the courtesan . . . She gives us her all. It no longer means much to her; nevertheless, it is all that she has to offer. And what do we give her in return? A few pennies. Hardly more than a lunch costs us . . . We take her and forget her

the next moment, to get back to ourselves . . . Does that mean nothing to us? Doesn't it mean much more, namely the safeguarding of our individuality? . . . And yet you do not want to let the day and the night points of view stand side by side with equal rights?"

"Claffey" was silent.

Fritz, who had listened eagerly and attentively to the Professor, hurriedly searched the hidden recesses of his memory in an effort to recall what he had heard during the lectures of the winter.

For the first time he ventured a reply.

"We live in the City of Kant," he began timidly, "and you yourself have said—" Frightened, he paused; he had almost let the cat out of the bag—"No, no, I'm mistaken. What I wanted to say was, one of my teachers said, 'Whether we realize it or not; whether we want it or not; his spirit always hovers about us.'"

"Quite right, and?"

"In the 'Metaphysics of Morality' it says that we should consider our body and the body of every one else as an end, never merely as a means to an end. Do we do that if we coincide with your nocturnal viewpoint?"

The Professor nodded approvingly. "Very nice," he said, "an undeniable tendency toward independence. Well, wasn't I right in saying that we are at the proper place at which to procreate ideas? Al-

though one would imagine that just here the *triumphant beast* would have to triumph in us." And for the first time one could detect a flash of reminiscence in his expression. "Very well, suppose we invade the territory over whose boundaries you, my worthy brother, have preceded me. See this girl?" He stroked her blond wavy hair affectionately. "On two occasions for an hour each time, I tried to find the human side in her and discussed her lot with her. That is why—you all saw it—she clings to me like a faithful dog. I almost believe that even in *this* place the postulate of Kant's philosophy can be upheld."

Fritz, abashed, remained silent, but "Claffey" asked to hear more on the subject of the paradox of the day and night viewpoints.

"In our attitude toward the Fatherland," he said, "there can be, for any one who takes himself seriously, only one conviction, ever and always, by day and by night."

And once again a thousand little devils played around the mouth of the Professor as he said, "Do you really think so, my highly esteemed brother? True, in this instance, to reach an understanding is more difficult because the day viewpoint of the one is the nocturnal point of view of the other; but he has both. I expect only the very stupid . . . Take for instance the 'forty-eighter,' his daytime viewpoint concerns itself with: the brotherhood of na-

tions, rights of man, everlasting peace, *contrat social*, district organization, sanctity of the majority, down with Bismarck! and the like . . . But at night when the shadow of the great Dictator weighs heavily upon him, when mastered he bows before him, he thinks in terms of: Stupidity of the Masses, fist in the scruff of the neck, imperialism, individual rights, *might is right*, bureaucracy, Hohenstaufen, vassalage of Islam, the lieutenant as the flower of humanity, the German spirit as savior of the world . . . However, I should have to be very much mistaken if that were not your day viewpoint, for it is your plain duty as Cheruskans."

"How do you know that we are Cheruskans?" "Claffey" asked in blank amazement.

"I have had an intimate acquaintance with the tribe since the time of Arminius," the Professor answered. "Latterly, the ghost of Varus appeared to me in a dream. He wants to fight you with short swords and without bandages and taping. I told him that it was not sporting but he did not know the meaning of that word. Such a fool, eh?"

The two Cheruskans laughed and "Claffey" did not pursue the matter further.

Within Fritz the effect of the alcohol began to yield to an intoxication of ideas. He, too, was a descendant of the "forty-eighters" and was brought up on their gospel, but he had worshiped at the shrines of the great generals to whom the Empire

owed its victories, and even though, on a previous occasion, the Professor had made no secret of his low estimate of Bismarck, the rapturous applause and the hymns of praise still clung to his every memory of him. Here lurked dormant incongruities, which most Germans believed long since eradicated but which were still smoldering menacingly beneath the foliage of the fading laurels.

Again he was about to risk a contradictory remark when "Claffey" forestalled him by saying, "You are almost too bright, my clever brother, you remind me of Mephistopheles in 'Faust' who reduced everything to rottenness; but since you just happen to be at it, don't you feel that you'd like to say a potent word about religion? Have you a day and night viewpoint up your sleeve covering it, too?"

"So we've finally come to it, God willing," the Professor answered. "First you didn't want to approach the subject and now you see that even in a brothel we Germans feel impelled to discuss metaphysics. And since you have conjured up the specter of Faust, I will wager with you that if this girl were to awaken at this moment, her first words would be: 'How is't with thy religion, pray?' . . . Yes, my children, any information that we are in a position to furnish is as adulterated as is this wine. I am not even thinking of the theologians who have emasculated their speculation, but even the philosophers have for the last three thousand years played the

sorry game of smuggling in through the back door what they have thrown out of the front."

Fritz listened with intensified interest. If he were to renounce the world of thought, which was his very existence, what could he substitute for it?

And the Professor continued: "Well, then, take first the day viewpoint which the Free Thinkers, in their enlightenment, have patched together for themselves. Religion. What is Religion? Mass feeding. People's requirements. School for Duty. Moral order of the universe. Realization of ethical postulates. Natural history of the 'Absolute.' And a thousand other synonyms, all of them expedients to evade the fine old conception of God with a long white beard and a warning forefinger raised aloft."

"If that is the day point of view," Fritz cried in anxious agitation, "what can the nocturnal point of view possibly be like?"

The Professor's face darkened. From behind the blue spectacles, he flashed a glance of resentment and reprobation. "Why should we fill our heads full of all of that stuff anyway?" he said with apparent carelessness. "Look rather at this girl," and he carefully adjusted the night jacket that had slipped back exposing her entire left breast.

Fritz felt grateful to him for this gentle consideration. For the girl who was lying there with relaxed body was no longer just a harlot. She was womanhood itself. She was virgin, sweetheart and

future mother merged into one. She was the dispenser of all earthly joy and all temporal peace. These things were deserving of respect. These gracious hidden charms should not be surrendered to some gluttonous man's greed.

"Look at this girl," the Professor repeated, "and try not to be pious. Wasn't I right in bringing you here? The brothel can sometimes better inspire us to prayer than the church can."

"That may all be very true," "Claffey" countered, "and I react just as you do. But you, sly fox that you are, have doubled in your tracks. What about the nocturnal point of view over which you've aroused our curiosity? Come, come now! Deliver the goods, gentle brother!"

The Professor stroked the hair of the girl lying there and seemed completely absorbed in gazing at her. Then, lifting his head, he said with a condescending smirk, "If you students wouldn't carouse until five in the morning, you would have time to indulge your thirst for knowledge at your desks. Buckle down and do a little thinking for yourselves. You'll find that at midnight a good many nocturnal points of view reveal themselves of their own accord."

Fritz said to himself, "What he refuses to tell us now, we shall never be able to unravel for ourselves. That truth is too deeply imbedded and is apparently too venomous for our consumption."

But, try as he would, he could not muster up courage to open his mouth again. He could not bring himself to be so familiar with the Professor. Therefore he refrained from addressing him. It was lucky that "Claffey" did not share his embarrassment.

"You, yourself, are an old souse, brother," he said, "and want to deliver a moral sermon to us; but you're right at that, so I won't try to delve any deeper. There is, however, just one thing more about which you must give us the benefit of your wisdom. If all of your philosophies about God are only paraphrased renditions of the old conception, for that is what you imply, and if God is not even a synonym for the laws of Nature or the so-called Absolute, for God's sake, what is he then?"

Again the Professor did not smile. His lips were tightly pursed and his eyebrows knit sharply together. "Very well then, chew on this if you like it: What man calls God is nothing but the fictitious and hypostatic sense of his own life. . . . Well, are you any wiser now than you were before?"

"The fictitious sense," Fritz cried, horrified. "Hasn't life then a *real* purpose?"

"That depends upon you, my friend," he replied. "Create one, and live accordingly; then it has one."

"But—but," he got no further. Too much of the heretofore unknown and of the unfathomable had been thrust upon him in this hour. Mountains of riddles towered before him. Abysses yawned and

lights seemed to dart over them. Who carried them, and where did they lure him?

Even "Claffey" had become serious. He stood up and planted himself directly in front of the Professor.

"Man, who are you?" he asked. "I suppose you are a kind of ragged genius who gives private lessons and writes recondite books. You ought to have them published. They'd make a big impression."

"I am touched by your magnanimous opinion," the Professor replied, and stretched out his hand in gratitude.

"Don't try to be funny," "Claffey" threatened and tried to pull his beard.

Then it so happened that the tuft of hair which hung from his chin remained between "Claffey's" fingers. He twisted it back and forth, completely bewildered.

"So that's how it is," he drawled. "You are not the man you seem to be. Well, then I won't question you any further."

And when at this moment the door to the rear rooms opened and his two fraternity brothers appeared on the threshold, tired but satisfied, he called out to them: "Boys, we're in the midst of an adventure and don't know it. We must turn about quickly and see that we get away."

The Professor laughed to himself convulsively, just as he had done in the sailors' tavern when he was still sitting in his corner, a lonesome observer.

He gave only a curt look, almost a command, to Fritz, which the latter, who had watched the discovery nearly at his wit's end, acknowledged with an understanding nod.

He then turned to the girl who was waking up and who, chilled and shuddering, snuggled close to him.

Each one threw a coin on the table and then departed with a formal bow.

"An uncanny fellow," said "Claffey" as the Cherusicans reached the street. "He wore a false beard and railed against Bismarck. He certainly must have been a Social Democrat."

Fritz walked silently along with them. "What is God?" he thought.

But he had forgotten the definition.

The next afternoon the Professor mounted the platform, pale and smilingly calm as always. His eyes, which seemed more deeply sunken in his haggard face than usual, were the only indication of his night of carousing. He spread his notes slowly on his desk and as he gathered himself together, he scanned his transparent white hands.

Fritz who occupied the left corner seat on one of the front benches stared anxiously up at him. He expected that a sign or look of recollection or recognition would be communicated to him.

But the Professor did not so much as look in his direction.

CHAPTER V

THE ROAD THITHER

THE man, who conducted his life in the foregoing manner and who was responsible for the events herein previously described, had been called to the University several years before at the instigation of the administration and upon the advice of the great Hegelian, who, because of his age, was forced to discontinue his lectures.

His stock of erudition did not carry much weight and was not extracted from the storehouse of Hegelianism. On the contrary, the two or three thin volumes he had published, aside from a conventional doctor's dissertation, showed a decided tendency to deviate from the only soul-saving doctrine that had formerly been advocated for several decades from practically every seat of learning in the Prussian state. Indeed, those who looked more closely were able to detect a furtively scornful note here and there for which the remaining adherents of Hegelianism would never have forgiven him.

But just in this respect the honored patriarch demonstrated his bigness for, once having satisfied himself as to the author's intellectual power, he did

not hesitate to recommend him to the Faculty who opposed him as his substitute and, provided he should prove himself capable, as his successor.

For the time being, of course, a full professorship was not to be thought of, for Sieburth was only in his early thirties and had, until only a short time before, been an instructor who had just recently been promoted to an assistant professorship.

He had enjoyed a rapid rise at a Mid-German university and had earned a good reputation which had preceded him here, except for one or two letters written from there by a couple of older gentlemen in private correspondence complaining of occasional arrogance; but as one of them wrote, this had become the fashion with the younger generation ever since the disastrous influence of Schopenhauer had been granted admittance.

His appearance and demeanor agreeably surprised those who were awaiting his advent with suspicion.

He was a well-bred young man with dreamy eyes and a discreetly subdued voice. His manners were flawless and indicative of the finest schooling even though his record showed that he had sprung from the lower classes. In all-around culture he was faultless; he was distinguished in his knowledge of the ancient classics and not as unfamiliar with mathematics and the theory of natural science as philologists commonly were found to be.

All in all, hopeful and full of promise, although—

This *although* was hard to define but it was there and could not be silenced. One did not altogether trust him. Perhaps because to this one or that one his smile seemed to conceal something; perhaps because the women were too strenuously on his side—to make a long story short, one felt the necessity of soon bringing a second one on the scene.

As is often the case in university life, it so happened that just at this time both professorships in philosophy were vacant because of the fact that the tenancy of the great Hegelian was merely a matter of form.

The second one arrived and in reality became the first. He had, for the past ten years, been employed by the State as assistant professor and seemed to carry with him the quiet assurance that after proving his worth over a certain period, he would step into the other of the two vacant positions.

From that time on Sieburth's attitude underwent a change.

Though at all times adhering to good form, he gave his superiority full play. His sneering became a scourge to more than one, and the more the other, a good preparatory routinist, settled down to his work at a normal pace, the more often it was felt that an injustice was being done to the more talented and important of the two that could not be rectified so easily.

For this could only happen when once the revered

patriarch had passed on, and that might still be a long way off.

At the same time, a rumor was being circulated that Sieburth's private life could not adapt itself to the strict conventions governing university life. The report did not do him any great amount of harm for he was still single and many a mother sighed hopefully in the thought that it would be the charms of her daughter that would lead him back to the path of virtue. One might even say that through this he became more desirable and more sought after. He alone, of all of the younger members of the teaching staff, had the reputation of being interesting, of being the one man with whom the matrons could indulge in an intimate conversation without considering it time wasted, and if one had tried the hearts and reins of each of the "The Three Fates" of whom much will be written, one would, without a doubt, have received this answer: "If I were thirty years younger and still free, who knows, who knows?"

In addition it so happened that his former life contained much that was romantic. Extraordinarily favored by luck, he was said to have risen from the lowest social rung to the dizzyest heights. Princesses were supposed to have loved him, and much coveted artists to have run after him.

All these things were whispered in the sofa corners at afternoon coffee parties and many tried to enhance the stories with new tidbits.

The truth of the matter was as follows: that he came from the lower classes, he never tried to conceal in conversation. On the contrary, lest any one suspect him of such an action he rather drew attention to the fact. His father, foreman of weights and measures in a malt factory, was killed one day by the falling of one of his weights, and in order to support herself and her boy, his mother worked as a laundress in the homes of aristocratic families where she was well liked because of her conscientiousness.

One evening when he called for his mother, he attracted the attention of the lady of the house, who took him with her into the front rooms. She liked the eight-year-old boy's ready answers and decided to let him attend the higher schools. When nine years later he was about to take his closing examinations, his benefactress died and, soon after, his mother.

Then a difficult period of starvation set in. Without a penny in his pockets, he left his Rhenish home and went to Berlin because he had been told that the opportunities to earn enough with which to continue his studies offered themselves there.

An adventurous struggle for the bare necessities filled the next few years, but he forged ahead. Not only did he keep pace with the rest in his own subject, the ancient languages, but he even found time and strength to satisfy his hankering after philosophy which had mastered him ever since, as a boy, he had realized that besides the Catholic viewpoint, other

lines of thought existed by which humanity seeks deliverance in its eagerness for the truth about ultimate things.

Equipped with iron health, he withstood all visitations of outward misery and internal distress. But ultimately he would have gone under, if it had not been for a happy circumstance that brought him the greatest stroke of luck that could possibly come into a young man's life.

Often, during Zeller's lectures, a young man sat next to him who, though insignificant, was very well dressed. He had a pale, freckled, anemic-looking face, blond hair brushed smoothly back, and he looked like a sick guinea pig, coughing and breathing heavily and born ostensibly only to die.

Two or three times when because of illness this young man had been absent from class, he borrowed Sieburth's notes, which were given him a little grudgingly—grudgingly, because it was Sieburth's habit to write critical comments, often more drastic than the proper respect for his teacher's wisdom warranted, in the margins.

But it was these very comments that directed Fortune's favor in his direction.

One day when, with a polite bow, the young man handed his notes back to him, he said, "I must admit that I learn more from your marginal comments than from anything the professor tells us. Will you be good enough to give me a few lessons to help me

out of my difficulties? I shall never be able to get through this stuff alone."

He then told him that his name was Prince Ari-
bert and added a surname that was identified with
one of the major principalities of central Germany.

That was the turn, the tribute that Fate, now
reconciled, owed him. After four weeks, the Prince,
who was only surrounded by a few insipid parasites,
could not get along without him and managed to
install him as a sort of tutor or assistant teacher in
his household.

And so when vacation time arrived, he spent it at
the Prince's ancestral home, thereby getting ample
opportunity to defend his position against a thousand
enemies and people who envied him.

And this position became even more assured when
he secured his degree without any great effort and
managed to pull his patron and charge through his
examinations.

His knowledge of the world and human nature
and his easy acquisition of every social form dated
from this time, but likewise his skepticism, his in-
tellectual insolence and his tendency to trifle with
any one he felt he could master.

And one thing more was the direct outcome of this
relationship. The Prince, who had believed since
childhood—and rightly so—that he was being con-
tinually spied upon, liked to go on secret expeditions.
In spite of his illness, or perhaps because of it, he

felt an insatiable passion for anything unknown to him, particularly for that subtlest of all riddles—woman.

“I’m going to die soon anyway,” he used to say, “and before I do, I want to have enjoyed to the fullest all there is to enjoy.” And Sieburth, whose strenuous effort to earn his daily bread precluded the possibility of realizing his own desires, experienced the selfsame urge only, being in perfect health, to a more pronounced and violent degree.

To live, live, live! To make up for everything he had missed; to anticipate everything that might later elude his grasp—that became the slogan of his life.

Only anxiety over the well-being of his charge checked the flood-gates of what might have led him to his destruction.

But this Harun-al-Rashid game became a fixture in the lives of these two young men who, although they hailed from diametrically opposite walks of life, shared in common the desire to subjugate life.

At night when they gave the spies the slip, they went first to a secret room they had rented in which they kept all kinds of paraphernalia for disguise. Rendered almost unrecognizable, they would wander about seeing the night life of this cosmopolitan city, firm in the belief that with each new prank they had conquered new worlds of knowledge.

At the same time Sieburth made the happy dis-

covery that through his personality and appearance he possessed an almost infallible influence over women, all of whom lost their hearts to him, while his friend on the contrary, stripped of his royal trappings, sank into complete oblivion.

And this power, enhanced by his growing self-assurance, stood him in good stead when during the vacation months he breathed the atmosphere of the court and of women who buried their impulses under rigid social conventions, only to give way to these impulses in secrecy and dread, yielding to him who, in an auspicious moment, understood the use of the divining rod of desire.

But he never really got much beyond an occasional adventure and all that was circulated about his romantic escapades was a fable.

He never neglected his studies and any of his enemies who watched him could report that it was often nearly morning before the light would go out in his workroom.

At this time his charge became more ailing. His doctors ordered a long sea voyage accompanied only by a conscientious young doctor and a servant, so faithful that by rights his history should find itself among the legends of heroes. They started on a trip around the world with the well-ordered intention of remaining in those spots that best agreed with the patient.

After a year and a half he returned in his coffin.

Death had overtaken him beneath the blooming cherry trees of Japan and when his will was opened—for his mother's death years ago had left him financially independent—Sieburth found himself with a legacy which enabled him to throw his teacher's calling into the discard and to establish himself without fear of years of privation as a lecturer of philosophy.

A few articles on the theory of cognition written in a style which only specialists in the subject could understand and appreciate, secured for him the approbation of influential men. The assistant professorship soon followed, and thereafter on the insistent demand of the Ministry of Education, the call to *The Albertina*, full of promise of promotion, which seemed to beckon to that zenith, that pinnacle of all hopes, the chair of Kant.

Even the fact of that other becoming a full professor before him could not in the main alter the situation. Wounded vanity was what he was suffering from, nothing else. Seniority was in favor of the other man, and it was up to him to acquiesce even though the consciousness of his superior ability filled him with bitterness.

He had lived in the coronation city for four years now. His classes grew from one semester to the next, which was all the more of an achievement because the other man now conducted the examinations

which alone enabled one to earn honors and a livelihood.

And his success became a full triumph, when the other—Hagemann was his name—faithfully imitated what he had evolved from his inmost need.

In conjunction with the prescribed course of special lectures which recurred in rotation, he was wont to offer each semester a general course in itself obligatory, but for which he always chose a new sensational topic, extracted from the history of literature, civilization and religion, a topic always in line with his actual field, but going as far as possible beyond its scope.

These public lectures, lasting one, or sometimes two hours, were considered an event in the cultured circles of the city and were frequented eagerly even by outsiders.

The next term, however, the other one followed suit almost regularly with a similar subject, sometimes differing from his only in the wording.

The initiated laughed; particularly the women in so far as they were acquainted with these facts through their husbands, for they rallied solidly around Sieburth and joined his steadily growing group of adherents.

It was his good fortune that so far he had not gone frequently enough to any one home to create a discussion as to his future. To be sure, he enjoyed

a wholesome friendship with two sisters who, by virtue of their beauty and intelligence, far outshone the daughters of any other members of the Faculty. They were the children of the celebrated surgeon to whose clinic all Easterners in search of aid made pilgrimages. He had even rescued one of them when she was thrown into the Baltic, the victim of a shipwrecked sailing party, but the anticipated consequences took so long to eventuate that the ensuing gossip soon died out.

And just as little unfavorable comment was created by the friendship which he discreetly cultivated with Mrs. Follenius.

The home of the wholesale merchant, Follenius, was considered, and rightly so, one of the best and most hospitable in that hospitable city and the flower of the university had frequented it for years back.

With certain exceptions, of course; for Follenius being the son and heir of an old "forty-eighter" naturally belonged to the Progressive party, and so only the professors who were decidedly hostile to the new reactionary movement which was in active progress, visited his house.

He was a stocky, corpulent man in the middle forties whose East Prussian gruffness had been successfully polished away through all manner of educational travels and his many years as the Berlin representative of the widely known firm.

There it had been his privilege even to play an

important part in the smart social set, which culminated in his leaving that city for the more austere East Prussia with a noted beauty on his arm who had divorced her first husband, a renowned musician, for his sake.

The mixture of homage and indignation with which the active imaginations of these good provincials received the news of this romance gradually subsided and a mild, smiling respect remained which became augmented by a feeling of big-hearted forgiveness, especially since the newly unfolding splendor of the house provided fresh sustenance from day to day.

Marion Follenius, who had at one time traveled half the world over with her celebrated husband, than whom she was scarcely less celebrated, now sat exiled in this corner of the earth trying to adapt herself to its narrow customs and stilted manners. She became a solicitous wife, a sacrificing mother and yet guided, as with her little finger, the social life of the upper classes in so amiable and matter-of-fact a manner that even the wives of their Excellencies, the governor and the commanding general, could well have taken her as an example.

The supple, willowy, slender world traveler turned, by reason of the calm, emotionless existence of this patrician household, into a buxom, complacent Rubensesque figure with a network of wine-colored veining finely traced on her well-rounded cheeks and

a pair of benign blue eyes that with the same even tenor always understood so well how to dominate her surroundings.

Only a person who looked deeper was able to detect in those rare moments of weary forgetfulness the consuming fire of her yearning for life that was always quickly stifled by her habitual self-possession.

And Sieburth was such a person, or rather the only one, for the ability to understand the subtleties of women was not an attribute of the men of this set whose marital respectability rarely suffered shipwreck for reasons other than a convenient housemaid or, if they aimed high, a less complacent ballet dancer.

One day while he was having tea at her home—for the ladies loved having him lead them into the precincts of philosophical thought—he openly confronted her with the result of his observations. She was not frightened, nor did she try to deny it. She only asked him never to discuss the matter again and this was done.

But this hour had established a silent understanding between them that asserted itself unobtrusively when they met at social functions by significant glances and warmer handclasps. And this understanding resulted in a mutual exchange of confidences.

One day she sent him an urgent message to come to her.

He found her in a perplexed state of excitement. "You must stand by me, Professor. You are the only one upon whose silence I can count. My first husband is here. He is stopping at an obscure hotel under an assumed name and is bombarding me with letters. He claims he can't live without me any longer; I must go with him and what not. Here, read it."

And she handed him a batch of letters in which the ravings of a man seized by hopeless longings were expressed in straggling characters.

"I must talk to him, must quiet him," she continued, "or I don't know what may happen. But I can't go alone. I might be recognized and then my reputation would be gone. You must go with me. Will you?"

He deliberated. "Even that could be misinterpreted," he said. "I'll make you a better proposition, madam. Let me go to him alone and only if that does not help matters—but it will, I'm sure of it. I believe I can vouch for that."

Glowing with gratitude, she accepted the helping hand.

He had not promised too much. The man so reminiscent and full of longing at first suspected him of being a favored lover, but within half an hour he had, by in turn jeering at him and being kind to him, succeeded in making him so thoroughly despondent that he allowed himself to be dragged to

the station and deposited in the next train, which took him out of the vicinity with all possible speed.

Sieburth even experienced the satisfaction of being termed his benefactor before he left.

This meritorious service formed another tie between this beautiful woman and himself, a tie which did not become what it actually was because neither of them had found the courage to call it by its proper name.

The existing strictness of the provincial code of behavior in addition to the unapproachable position of this patrician lady forbade the fast and loose game of love regardless of how ready it was to assert its existence.

But whatever it was that vibrated between them made them both realize that they were irrevocably bound to one another by compliance and promise and the unexpressed only served as an added impetus which, however, went hand in hand with a tingling inward satisfaction at being able to withstand this craving.

And so they lived their own lives, she with her honest husband, her pretty children and her never ending social obligations, and he with his books, his students, his serious aims, and the little adventures which gayly bordered the road thither, each one awaiting the moment that would throw them into each other's arms.

CHAPTER VI

SUNRISE

IN early May, with the beginning of the summer semester, the house of Follenius opened its hospitable doors once more to its wide circle of friends.

This was an old custom, but if this time it was observed with more than the usual amount of pomp, it was prompted by a motive which every one knew and appreciated.

The appointment of Frank Hildebrand, the brilliant historian who had already at that time made a name for himself through his research work in connection with old records dating back to the days of the Saxon emperors, and who later became positively famous because of his "History of the Hohenstaufen," had already for months been the favorite topic of conversation in all circles whether closely or remotely concerned in it.

Although he was only thirty, he had attained his full professorship and gave promise of being a shining light of *The Albertina* and of drawing a crowd of enthusiastic pupils to him from all over the country. He was a disciple of Treitschke, glowing, like him, with patriotism and like him a prophet of Germany's future greatness to whom all listened en-

thrilled who basked in the newly vindicated military glory of the Hohenzollerns.

He was welcomed with open arms and those, if any, who had any doubts about him were soon completely disarmed by his personality.

An *anima candida*. One felt this as soon as one met him and looked into his sparkling eyes over which Bavarian blond locks of hair fell in tousled disorder.

His greeting spread cheer by its naïve and joyous cordiality, and only his handshake hurt.

He brought a young wife with him who seemed no less promising than himself. She was descended from titled but impoverished Franconian stock and up to the time of her marriage had been lady-in-waiting at a South German Court where the young scholar who had been called there to deliver a series of lectures had won her for himself.

And she had followed him without hesitation for she, like every one else, had been carried away by the magic of his oratory and the enthusiasm he spread whenever he mounted the platform.

Few had seen her up to this time but there were fantastic rumors of her flowerlike charm and exotic beauty, and anxious minds wondered how she would thrive in the raw, robust atmosphere of the north-east.

The object of the party which Sieburth was pre-

paring to attend was to introduce this unusual and distinguished couple into local society.

He had really decided to waive all social functions for the next few weeks on account of the lecture notes he was preparing on the trend of contemporary philosophy as influenced by natural science, but Marion Follenius had enclosed with her invitation a pale gray, silver-edged note like those which had been fluttering to him for the past year with or without a pretext. In it she had written: "I promise you that I will abnegate myself to the extent of giving you the best place my table affords, and I count on your coming as my reward."

There could be no opposition in the face of this, since there was as yet no sign of an inward revolt against the episode which was linked with the name of Marion Follenius.

The noisy stir of a festive throng was already in evidence by the time he entered the rooms.

Women in abundance, bare shoulders in contrast with high-necked black silks that reeked of lavender and camphor, diadems reposing in artistically dressed mountains of hair next to sleek, lace-bedecked heads.

And men who exhibited every degree of ignorance in matters of fashion. 'Alongside of dress suits of various types was the tedious cutaway coat with the flowered velvet waistcoat; beside the white bow tie and starched collar was the flowing neck

cloth that was wound around stick-ups in mid-century style.

Sieburth was considered the fashion plate of this set and he attached much importance to being worthy of his reputation. The less he hid his humble ancestry, the more he wished, by virtue of his appearance, to render it forgotten. He had even painstakingly patterned his manner of speech after the typical man of the world, and no one in society was ever in a position to detect the smallest indication of coarseness in him. Thus, in surroundings where rustic bluntness was cultivated even by men of highest rank, he formed a welcome contrast to those who unhesitatingly cast off all restraint the moment ever-lurking candor began to loose their tongues and brains.

After he had greeted Marion with exaggerated formality, and she had shaken his hand with a significant pressure of her fingers, and after he had been boisterously and heartily welcomed by his host, he did not hesitate to approach the group of older ladies around whom instinctive awe had created a sort of void.

They were the wives of three professors whom he had once nicknamed "The Three Fates" because at their coffee parties disposition had been made of the daughter of many a scholar and the future of many a young instructor had been shaped. To defy their matrimonial dictates was hazardous and nominations

and appointments could often be traced to their very sofa tables and any one who did not know how to ingratiate himself with them could turn black in the face before a promotion would be forthcoming.

Sieburth was received with unmistakable favor. Each was kissed on the hand and smiled graciously.

The wife of Privy Councilor Kemmerich, the most distinguished of the three, went so far as to administer a gentle rebuke, telling him that his hermit life was threatening to turn him into a complete stranger, and if the wives of Professor Ehmke and Professor Vallentin did not follow suit, it was only out of deliberate tact because both of them had marriageable daughters at home while high decree had definitely slated Sieburth for one of the surgeon's daughters.

And now the Hildebrand couple made their entrance; he unconcerned and radiant as always, constantly shaking the blond forelock away from his brow. And she—so this was she! This fragile doll with her too slender, birdlike throat which no chain or necklace shortened, with her beaming black eyes and her cameo-like profile which, owing to a thin gold band drawn horizontally through her dark, wavy hair, appeared even more queenly, more classic.

So that was she!

And Sieburth experienced a start such as you feel when, in the congestion of a crowded city street, you suddenly encounter the familiar figure of an intimate friend.

And yet he knew he had never met her.

A short pause ensued. Even "The Three Fates" watched in silence until an introduction would make it possible for them to exhaust their stock of affectionate protestations.

And then it was his turn.

The two men knew each other from the Assembly Room and exchanged friendly greetings.

But she, startled and apparently surprised, stiffened for a fraction of a second, and the hand which she was about to offer hesitated uncertainly at the crook of her arm.

But almost immediately she laid her cool fingers in his and the next moment he was able to study the nape of her neck which revealed her lean shoulder blades in all their girlish prominence.

A sense of satisfaction took possession of him. What was there about him that surprised her? A sensation of mystic recognition similar, perhaps, to the one that had overwhelmed him when he first saw her? And as senseless—and yet, what was it Goethe said?

"Ah, thou wert to me in former ages
Either sister or a loving mate."

What had happened to him to-day could have been the experience of any one who had suddenly come upon an unforeseen fulfillment.

He stared after her meditatively, when suddenly

Hagemann, the senior member in his department, loomed up before him and stretched out his hand in his customary timidly cordial manner.

The good Hagemann! The industrious Hagemann! The meritorious Hagemann!

There were no words of praise kindly enough to characterize the inferiority of the man, who had attained the full professorship ahead of him.

Not that he begrudged it to him. Certainly not. Envy was not in his heart.

But it should have been a worthier man, not this incompetent crammer, who dictated almost literally what he contemplated asking at future examinations, who never offended any one and always held to the comfortable middle road and who, when he did engage in controversy, assumed a tone so plaintive that one would have thought he was trying to apologize both for himself and for the person he was attacking.

There he stood in all his burliness—he had indeed grown stout during the winter—stroked his sparsely bearded, good-natured plump face, and waited with anxious suspicion for the malicious gibe he felt sure Sieburth had in store for him.

But to-day the latter was not in the humor to banter words with his successful rival. He tossed him a casual compliment on the good attendance at his Kant lectures, which they conducted alternately from term to term, then turned his attention to the lady he was taking in to supper.

And it so happened that she turned out to be the one who, according to the verdict of "The Three Fates," threatened to become his destiny.

For that reason he would gladly have held her in the utmost contempt, but involuntarily he had to admit that no cleverer, no kindlier, no innately more genteel, and no outwardly more charming being was to be found in the entire city.

Unfortunately this abundance of virtues was not confined to *one* but was embodied in *two* individuals.

Two sisters, scarcely a year apart, both as tall and slender as young pines, with shy smiles of self-esteem playing around their good-natured round faces, with characteristically Slavic, short, straight noses and with the selfsame Germanic heritage of flaxen hair.

When you were with the one you gave her the unquestioned preference, but when the other came into view, you completely forgot the former in her favor.

And since he did not like vacillating between the two and was prejudiced against matrimony into the bargain, he decided not to tie himself to either and after bland courting always to extricate his head from the noose.

Their names were Cilly and Milly.

But this was Cilly whom at Cranz, a year and a half ago, he had carried ashore in his arms, and who was considered to have the best prospects ever since.

She welcomed him gayly yet with composure, with too much composure in fact, for one to be able to give credence to the genuineness of her serenity.

As he walked toward the table with Cilly on his arm, he again encountered those flaming black eyes that had so disturbed him before, but this time they were fastened on him in smiling greeting as if they wanted to speak or call to him.

After he had walked around the narrow end of the table and had arrived near her who was already seated, he found the answer to the riddle. The seat on her right had been assigned to him and she had read his name on the neighboring card and was waiting for him.

The host who was her dinner partner said to Sieburth with a smile, "Tell me now, didn't my wife provide handsomely for you?"

And he thanked Marion, who had observed the little scene from the other end of the table, with a bow.

But Follenius claimed the attention of the stranger and he was kept busy with Cilly.

They, however, had exhausted every possible subject by this time. They knew each other well, they understood each other thoroughly; in fact, they might have mounted the nuptial couch without thereby revealing to each other new aspects of personality.

And often he had asked himself, "Why don't we

take the step?" Her father, through his practice, had long since become a rich man. What he himself lacked to start a household could easily be supplied by her parents. Her heart was free. Free for him. He knew that too. A thousand little hints had convinced him of that.

And if the flirtation with Marion Follenius had not intervened—

Over there she sat enthroned, attentive in housewifely fashion to the old Chancellor of the University, but her glance strayed incessantly toward him and the two women between whom he was seated as between two fates waiting their opportunity to swallow him up.

What had possessed her to place him next to the beautiful woman, who, since she was the guest of honor, should have had an older, more deserving man, a full professor to say the least, at her side? Did she want to put him to the test, throw him in the way of temptation, or was it self-confident coquetry, designed to draw him even closer to herself?

So he mused while the intelligent girl, who because of her pride and purity hadn't the remotest idea of what was going on, tried her best to overcome his absent-mindedness.

Finally the man at her other hand claimed her attention so that he was free to devote himself to

the stranger who intrigued his interest and whom the host had released for a few moments.

"At last!" he said, aloud.

"At last, what?" she asked smiling.

"Too bad," he said.

"Too bad, what?" she questioned further.

"That you ask, instead of agreeing with me. Such curiosity must be mutual if it is to lead to any consequences."

"And what would these consequences be?"

"To become acquainted!"

"I believe, Professor, that one quickly learns to know us professors' wives. I see, judging from your ring finger, that you are not married, which I must admit I knew to be the case anyway. It won't be through any fault of my husband's or mine if you do not occasionally spend one of your lonely evenings with us."

He voiced his gratitude in appropriate language, and she said, smiling, "I seem to hear a doubtful note in your voice."

"You heard correctly, madam," he answered. "What I mean by getting acquainted does not coincide with your interpretation; much as I appreciate your kindness. At a first meeting one is unwittingly placed in a specific category; either one is relegated to the ranks of the many who skirt the outer fringes of one's life like puppets, or one is permitted to touch

upon that life. It is my ambition to belong to the latter. Afterwards when the parts are distributed, it is too late to make a change. The opportunities have been lost, one goes on playing one's part for years, and one fine day—*Commedia finita.*"

"And suppose it wasn't a comedy?"

"To that end I attach so much importance to this moment."

She silently made a bread pill out of bits of her roll, and reflection or rather dejection was expressed in her furrowing brow.

"I am not quite clear," she answered finally, "as to whether I should be grateful for your interest or whether I should defend myself against it!"

"By all means do the latter, madam. Then I have received my sentence and I shall never again venture to hope for your interest."

But when she looked up at him startled and with a little disappointment in her glance, he supplemented hurriedly, "By which I do not mean that I won't be delighted to make noticeable inroads into your husband's humidor."

She laughed gayly and without embarrassment. "Under these conditions self-defense would not be too trying. But why all this? In the three weeks that we have been here I have heard a great deal about you. Please show me your hands. They are supposed to be the most delicately constructed mechanisms."

He calmly put down his fork and laid his hands, palms downward, before her.

"How does a man come into possession of women's hands?" she asked disapprovingly.

"To prove the fallacy of a paradox," he replied, "and not only in one sense, for if heredity counted for anything, they would be paws."

"One cannot imagine that this right hand would be capable of a truly hearty handclasp," she remonstrated further.

"Nor its possessor endowed with a true heart, eh?"

"Possibly."

"Do you wish to make a test?" he asked.

"Of your true heart?" she bantered. "No."

"Nor of my heartiness either?" And he stretched his hand toward her.

She thought for a moment. "Very well," she said resolutely, and tendered her right hand to him.

For a fraction of a second their hands remained in each other's grasp and their eyes looked into each other.

"Approved?" he asked.

"Approved," she replied.

"If you should ever doubt me," he said, "I shall remind you of this moment."

"You say that so solemnly," she teased.

"I feel solemn," he countered. "I feel as if I had sealed a bond, the bond for which I longed from the first minute I saw you."

She looked at him almost frightened and turned quickly to her host who had been trying to draw her attention for a long time.

And with that the interlude ended; for Cilly also had to be looked after.

He felt as if he had traversed in five minutes a distance that under ordinary conditions would have taken him weeks, months, or even years to cover.

She was called Hermione, as was evidenced by the place card which she had carelessly shoved in his direction.

Hermione!

All sorts of recollections of Euripides flashed through his mind. What was it that her namesake said to Andromache?

“Love is every woman’s crown.”

And what did Andromache reply?

“In honor’s limits,
’Tis dishonor else.”

In this instance the old poet was unerringly right, he thought, for he could imagine no man but her own husband having the right to encircle those slender shoulders with his arms.

Then, from the other side, Cilly’s voice reached his ear. “When do we go sailing again, Professor?”

She delighted in dwelling on this little adventure which had not been particularly dangerous but which

her fevered imagination had exaggerated to larger proportions.

"It is not to be considered for at least three months," he said, turning quickly toward her and thought to himself, "By that time we could almost be divorced again."

But he was immediately ashamed of this degrading thought. This dear, proud, sensitive girl deserved better things and yet he was so filled with the image of this new vision, so moved and stimulated by what had passed between them, that he—God forbid—had nearly proposed to Cilly.

But no, there was still too much to live for in the world. So many lips waiting for fulfillment were still to be kissed, so many thoughts, germinating only in solitude, were still unthought! Why then plunge oneself already into this suicide they call marriage?

Cilly, who was remarkably clever and well versed in every detail of his particular field of knowledge, asked him about his work and inquired especially about the course of lectures advertised to the general public for the new semester.

He had often discussed his plans with her and he could hardly deny her the privilege of knowing more about them.

And with more candor than he was accustomed to display, he admitted, "I am tormented beyond endurance, for each day convinces me more definitely

that I am lacking in the proper equipment for my work."

She laughed merrily and confidently for she considered his knowledge boundless and thought that he was joking.

"I was never more serious in my life," he assured her, "and to give you an example: a few seconds ago I plagued myself with a quotation from Euripides. Will you be kind enough to tell why a man who wants to divert himself and others with the outcome of modern experience should concern himself with dear old Euripides? Why doesn't something more fitting occur to him? Because he, like most of us, unless he has forsaken theology, hails from the realm of philology and has his storehouse of associations crammed with classical junk. You have no idea of how I envy you, for instance."

"Me, Professor, for heaven's sake, me?"

"Yes, because of the atmosphere of natural science in which you grew up. How often I have surprised you in the pursuit of a train of thought common to a biologist, and only to a biologist, while to me, on the other hand, nothing occurs except all sorts of obsolete theoretical trash that lost its meaning more than two thousand years ago or else has become a truism!"

She was so accustomed to his game of paradoxes that she first had to read in his face the assurance of how ruthless was the inner conflict that was responsible for this avowal.

"In my limited way I want to say what I can in contradiction," she answered, "and want to make you see how I, from my stupid lay point of view, interpret this business of philosophy. I see a great drama, as old as the human thirst after knowledge . . ."

"Why just a drama?" he inquired.

"Because there is endless conflict and suspense and development; because everything divides itself into acts and presses onward to a catastrophe . . . What will you contribute to the culmination of this catastrophe—and you will, I feel it, you will—if you pry yourself loose from the presuppositions by which all thought—yes, yours too—has been governed? It seems to me that the natural sciences can be of little use here. They only come into their own when the catastrophe is over."

"What do you mean by catastrophe?" he inquired further.

"I do not know. It's something I've felt only since I've known you. You once told me that your profession was a game of patience played with empty shells. You were joking, of course."

"Not entirely," he interposed.

"I know, such things are always partially serious and that part, be it ever so small, suffices one day to upset the entire game. I keep thinking that eventually you will be the one to do that. That will be your mission and to it you will owe your station."

Her eyes were aglow with a fire that kindled his heart. How did he come to deserve such humble esteem, such complete faith? And which of the arts did she employ to lay bare the very kernel of his inmost aspirations?

This twenty-four-year-old girl with her pug nose and her curly ash-blond hair spoke like a prophetess, and she had lovely shoulders, and woman's charms that were spiritual as well as physical lay in readiness. All that was needed was to bring her to womanhood, to make her his wife.

Again and again the idea recurred to him, only to be thrust back.

Not yet! Not to-day! Not on this day during which, at his left, a new world of mystery had unfolded itself and a new bit of femininity had imperiously entered his life.

Not for nothing had he been struck as if by lightning when he saw her come toward him and not without reason had he seen reflected in her the same process of presentiment and of recollection that continued to take turbulent possession of him.

A Fate was preparing to lavish favors upon him. Therefore, no cowardice now! No sidestepping and crawling into the matrimonial bed!

Marion now rose and terminated the dinner.

As a grateful comrade he squeezed Cilly's hand which she gave him wearily, like a falling leaf, while

from the left he intercepted a radiant promising glance. . . .

Whatever else occurred on this evening was lost in a maze of pictures and phrases.

And when his hostess, with secret understanding in her laughing eyes, saw him come toward her and extended her hand for his kiss, she asked in a whisper, "Did my arrangement suit you?"

Then, when he had thanked her with appropriate fervor, came another whisper, "Since you have no lectures to-morrow, please come to tea." And as he nodded in acceptance he thought to himself, "Who are you? How much were you only an hour ago, you phantom out of the eternal yesterday?"

Then he had greeted a half-dozen of his colleagues, listened to Frank Hildebrand discoursing in lengthy detail, even though his vibrant pathos got a little on his nerves—but after all they were bound to be friends . . . had laughingly asked "The Three Fates" to mete out gentle punishment to him, to which they had smilingly agreed although they did not know for what . . . and had given Cilly's sister, who was now more than ever out of the question, her measure of brotherly devotion and finally he had slunk out into the street long before leaving time, weary of nonsensical chatter, and of lights and women and wine.

A light May snow playfully blew its flakes at

him. The air was like an ice-cold bath into which he jubilantly plunged himself.

In this cool matter-of-fact man ecstasy surged so violently that he spread his arms out in space as if he could capture and press hopes and dreams, blessings and enormities to his heart like crowns or like swords.

"The rest of this night must be spent in work," he decided, for this excess of joy ought to be earned.

But before beginning, he turned up the collar of his overcoat, pulled his hat far down over his forehead, and went for a little while on a woman hunt.

CHAPTER VII

BETWEEN TWO FIRES

THE commotion in the so-called Faculty Room between forenoon classes was second only to the turmoil in a beehive. They surged forward, then disappeared, buzzed and again crowded as if all the sciences known to the world had been turned loose in opposition to one another.

And yet, on the whole, the feeling was entirely amicable.

Opponents shook hands with one another. Greetings were exchanged in passing with even the most casual acquaintances, and it was only evident to one who knew his way about that cliques had segregated themselves and that factional differences found involuntary expression in a word or a look.

Sieburth, who by ten o'clock had already put his morning session behind him, darted back and forth among his colleagues bowing and chatting, before reaching for his hat and coat; not at the insistence of his social instinct or because his heart went out to those others—on the contrary, he would much rather have kept to himself—but he knew that because of his sharp tongue he was not much of a favorite and

realizing that the absentee is always in the wrong, he thought it only politic to face his antagonists whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Up to this time none of the opponents had displayed any malice and every once in a while, by contributing a particularly apt word, he succeeded in converting the existing feeling into one of amicability until—it wasn't so much a mania for ridicule as it was a stinging urge to drag hidden contradictions into the spotlight—until his fatally lucid insight and sharp tongue again lost him the advantage he had gained.

And how amusing nearly all of them were, sitting on their so-called reputations as on bed chambers, all of them like victims of intellectual hemorrhoids!

They started out with flying colors to bring the world to their feet by virtue of their overpowering personalities, and felt thoroughly satisfied now that they had been gloriously vanquished, in having secured a small position out of which they could support their families and could be held in civic esteem. Term after term they repeated their routine, all the while brewing a thin soup in the saucepan of their subject which they hoped, if they were able to find a publisher, to dish out to the world as the newest contribution to worldly wisdom, expecting praise from those to whom they had once accorded it, and satisfied on the whole if the sheets devoted to their particular branch took notice of them.

Only the fewest, it seemed to him, were exceptions, for any one who accomplished anything or even gave promise of doing so, was soon called to the intellectual centers of Germany; but those of them who had grown to love this harsh eastern country, or had found a wife there, or were bound by ties of friendship, did not allow the opportunities the empire offered to lure them away but settled for life in a spot which the more ambitious regarded only as a rung in the ladder of advancement.

To this group belonged the great Hegelian who was now heading in self-imposed loneliness toward complete extinguishment; and then there was a famous physicist who likewise no longer lectured; and not the least of these was that historian of late Roman civilization whose life work still remains undimmed to this day.

The little old Jew who peered searchingly and sagely into the world through red-lidded eyes and whom we shall call Auerbach in this book, was one of the two or three teachers in similar fields of endeavor for whom Sieburth had any respect, involuntary though it may have been.

It was through him that he was brought into closer touch with certain political contentions which after years of national harmony intensified themselves and once more came under discussion.

The Albertina had always been a citadel of liberalism and teachers and pupils alike had taken a pas-

sionate interest in the constitutional battles of the fifties and sixties.

The Progressive party, which had entered the lists as the heir of the Democrats, owed its origin to East-Prussian stiff-neckedness, and even though the academic circles had taken no active part in its formation, they naturally, because of their coöperative leanings, considered themselves affiliated with it.

The extravagant hero cult, which had come into existence after the victories of the year '70 and the founding of the Empire, had established new values and had created a harmony which seemed to unite the entire German populace in a singing of hymns of praise and a gathering around Bismarck's footstool until his reversion to conservatism again aroused the dormant opposition, and while a portion of the citizens, particularly those who had grown wealthy and influential, were satisfied under the guardianship of this almighty statesman, the rest only felt the oppression of the Junker's fist on their necks and horrified saw the scourge of Absolutism brandished over them.

Horrible recollections of the times of most drastic reaction darted through their only half-assuaged minds and even the academic world could not be indifferent to them, and while on the one hand a hankering after opposition asserted itself, even in those who until now had been staunch followers of the creator of new Germany, on the other a stealthy

ultraconservatism found sycophants and henchmen even among the Faculty.

To be sure, only a few rallied around Professor Pfeifferling, the valiant Germanist who had the unenviable courage to advocate the cause of old Prussian despotism. But just this group, which received the silent support of the theologians and toward which the former members of the conservative fraternities inclined, grew from semester to semester and showed rather plainly that it was cultivating friendly relations with the Ministry of Education. In this way it appealed strongly to all those ambitious and aspiring souls who spent sleepless nights nursing the hope of a full professorship or of a recall to the more important centers of learning.

Up to the present Sieburth had gone about his business taking no apparent interest in either party, a trifle malicious, a trifle superior, as befits a man who recognizes and loves primarily the weaknesses in those around him.

It was the hidebound spirit that amused him in the apostles of freedom, their helpless adhesion to the pathetic afflictions of a period long since past and their hopeless longing to find material for renewed spellbinding in the rather unimportant conflicts of an innately harmonious time. With the Reactionaries, on the other hand, it was the stupid idolatry of brutal success, the sacrifice of individuality and the bowing to the demands of self-aggrandizement,

for it was nothing but rampant self-aggrandizement that caused the landholders and industrialists to abase themselves before the creator of German prosperity.

Such was the state of affairs when on a balmy May morning Professor Auerbach stopped his younger colleague, who had intended slipping by with an affable smile, and drew him to one side.

"You are through," he said, "and so am I. How about taking a walk in the Königsgarten?"

Sieburth bowed his assent as the occasion demanded.

Past bowing students the two men went forth into the open where the morning sun was transforming the young green of the shrubbery into sheaves of fire.

"We meet often, and speak so rarely," the little old man began, "it is high time we get acquainted, that is to say, if you are agreeable."

Sieburth voiced his astonishment at this qualification in a polite rejoinder.

"We Jews have reason to be careful," the other replied. "I shouldn't be surprised if the new Berlin movement, which tries to reduce us to the level of outcasts, has already extended to this remote spot . . . the student of history is quite familiar with such phenomena. Whenever a wave of nationalism was at a loss for an issue the Jews had to serve as the butt, by which I do not mean to intimate that they had never given cause for ill feeling. But leaving

that aside, what I wanted to discuss with you is something else. That we members of the Faculty are interested in you and your opinions you will readily understand, but none of us is quite clear on the question of your political leanings. During the hubbub of national enthusiasm this was not a very important matter, but the time seems to be approaching when a sharp differentiation will be made. . . . The familiar *cuirassier boot* which is now trampling Catholicism underfoot and which seeks to exterminate the Social-Democratic party appears to be preparing for a kick at the Liberal party, and what will then become of academic freedom at the universities, any one can imagine. For that reason I think the time has come, even for those of us who are not politically inclined, to take sides. I do not believe that I am far wrong when I assume that you do not care to ally yourself with the Pfeifferling faction; therefore I ask you, if we, we who belong to the Left party, should get together for the purpose of taking an active part in future political issues, will you then join us?"

Sieburth became more uncomfortable with each sentence. He felt as if a fist were reaching for his throat to wring a confession from his soul. Now was the time for him to consider carefully and to preserve his independence without offending the adherents of any particular party.

"You are right, Professor," he replied, "in be-

lieving that I would not mix myself up in the politics of those wild men, but neither have I the inclination to affiliate myself with the opposing party. Just as the poet contends that he must stand on a higher level than that provided by a party platform, so the teacher of philosophy must likewise apply that formula to himself. This level need be no higher than a molehill if only there be room enough for him to stand alone. I attach particular importance to that word *alone*, and because of that word, Professor, I ask you not to include me in your future plans. If the hour of need should arise, I will come to you entirely of my own accord, that is, if you should still feel that my modest assistance can be of any use to you."

But Professor Auerbach was not so easily satisfied.

"When once the hour is at hand it will probably be too late for any help, and the command which a century ago silenced your great predecessor could easily descend upon you before you realize it. For that reason, prepare. I take very little interest in present-day philosophy, yours included, but I am almost convinced that you will be the first among us to be taken to task."

Sieburth was startled. So there were people who were watching him and who had noticed his occasional outbursts of temperament, for he was not conscious of having otherwise sinned against the spirit of the approved schools.

"I am still far too unimportant to arouse the suspicion of the guardians of public opinion," he said with apparent carelessness, "and if one were to force silence upon me, it would be embarrassing to try to stipulate what I should be silent about. But be that as it may, you may be right and in that case no better fortune could come to me than that I should have the martyr's palm pressed into my hand. Death by fire is obsolete and anything else that is in prospect can easily be endured."

The old gentleman could see that his efforts to convert his young colleague to his side had failed.

"I will not press you any further," he said, "only this much I should like to have accomplished to-day—that you will come to us at your convenience, look over one of our meetings, and if the people and what they have to put before you should not displease you, come again. That does not obligate you to anything; in fact it entitles you to join the opposing faction should the spirit move you to turn to them."

"No danger," Sieburth laughed, "and to prove to you that I am open to conviction, I will gladly take advantage of your friendly suggestion and will in fact voice my opposition should the note of conviction become too sonorous for my taste."

And now the old man was laughing too, and they parted the best of friends.

Scarcely a week later at the same place and the same hour it so happened that Privy Councilor

Pfeifferling, with whom up to the present time Sieburth had had only official dealings, stretched two eager, friendly hands toward him and with a patronizing assiduosity in his piercing eyes, exclaimed, "Dear friend, there you are! Dear, dear friend!"

And when he must have noticed the decided astonishment in Sieburth's expression, he said, "No, no, you must not be surprised. No, certainly not. You must know how much I think of you, and I had hoped that you too—you are surely familiar with the passage in the Lament: 'The faithful is aggrieved by infidelity!' That, of course, is not intended as a reproach, but I must admit that it has hurt me for a long time that you pay no attention to me."

Sieburth modestly suggested that it would have been in very bad taste to force oneself on a man of such preëminent importance.

The old blow-hard, who rolled his "r's" as if he had been born on the stage, was beside himself with well-meaning indignation.

"No, how can you, my friend? How can you so underestimate your own value? You, the pride of our younger generation. You, the man who, we hope, will one day occupy the foremost philosophical chair in Germany! You have a right to choose your friends, and I would be glad to number myself among them."

Stocky, gnarled, with a shock of white hair and a white beard which bordered his shining double chin

like a napkin tucked into his collar, with eyes wherein the falseness was so apparent that it amounted almost to candor, with pot-belly thrust forward and legs spread apart, he stood before Sieburth holding his hands caressingly in his big paws.

A monster so artlessly hideous that while seeming to ridicule it one became its victim.

In the same breath he would quarrel, abuse and spit, praise, flatter and fawn.

He treated his literary opponents like criminals, and the outbursts of rage which he vented on them and sent into the world from the chair were written down and preserved as curios. This did not prevent him from calling these gentlemen his friends when they met, nor from sending them his lampoons with cordial greetings.

He was feared in the teaching body as no one else was, and although nobody wanted any dealings with him, one was extremely careful not to offend him and allowed him to blacken or whitewash, uncontradicted, when and as he liked.

This man had, without reserve or scruples, made himself the standard bearer of the Prussian reactionaries. No invective was poisonous enough to properly brand the despoiling influence of Liberalism on the masses, and during the time that Bismarck had flirted with their ideas he, too, had been an object of his hatred.

Only when the great statesman, vexed by the op-

position with which the realization of his economic schemes met among the Liberals, had turned once more to the bigoted agrarian Junkerism from which he sprang, offering and seeking support—only then had the great student of legendary tradition whose view of life coincided with that of Theodoric the Great or Henry the Fowler renewed his allegiance.

Sieburth searched for a reason that was plausible enough to warrant his declining the invitation, but Pfeifferling anticipated him.

“I really do believe you have never set foot in my modest home. That cannot go on, my dear friend. As it is, my good wife inquires about you, so decide on an evening in the near future, say Saturday or Sunday, as you please, and share our simple evening meal with us. No excuses will be accepted. To-morrow then? Good!”

There was nothing to be done about it. With that man as an arch enemy in the Faculty, an appointment to a full professorship would be definitely out of the question.

The next evening he went half disgruntled, half amused to the home of the Privy Councilor.

It was a scholar's home like a thousand others, lined with bookcases, reeking with stale tobacco smoke, furnished with Spartan simplicity, untidy and yet not without coziness.

The mistress of the house, who was small, plump,

and wore a black lace cap over her thinning gray hair, radiated motherly affection.

There were no longer any children in the house. The daughters had married and the sons occupied positions as instructors where prospects of advancement beckoned them.

The Privy Councilor appeared in a long frock coat and black silk cravat, beaming with genial benignity.

"This is an evening which shall go down in the annals of this house, never to be supplanted," he said, "because through it a knot is being tied that no sword of Alexander can ever cut."

"For heaven's sake," thought Sieburth, scanning the bookshelves, but nowhere could he find a hole through which he might escape.

In the dining room the damask tablecloth on which the company dishes were set shone under the flowered opalescent rotundity of the lamp, and steam arose from the tea glasses.

Everything seemed tranquil and happy, but Sieburth felt like a convict in a cell.

The meal was given over to small talk, yet was fairly free from gossip.

Even the designing activities of "The Three Fates" were barely touched upon, but after all they belonged to the same coterie in which Sieburth enjoyed a secure position, and therefore could not be maligned to any extent, so fortunately he was spared the necessity of taking sides.

The Privy Councilor silently relinquished the field to his wife and busied himself with boning the herring which, as is the custom in the spring, formed the first course of the meal. Even when the odor of the veal cutlet was wafted from the plates, a kindly, appeasing word escaped his greasy lips only at rare intervals.

"What can he possibly want of me?" thought Sieburth, whose position was becoming more and more uncomfortable.

It was only after the two men had retired to the dimly lit study, that, by the glow of the cigar and pipe, what had been lurking in the background all evening slowly came to the fore.

"You see, my dear friend, when the choice is given me between being a sleepyhead or a coward, I choose to be neither and elect to go fearlessly straight for my goal; and that I am doing to-day when I tell you as frankly as I can: 'I've long been grieved to see that thou art in such company.' What do those people want of you? You are much too brainy to drink in that lukewarm belly-wash that the gentlemen of the Progressive party set before you. . . . See, the times are as fruitful as the womb of a pregnant woman; and then these people come along and show us some fossilized ideas of a train of thought that originated as far back—one might imagine as far back as a million years ago, even if it is only a few measly decades—and offer it to us as

the very latest novelty of modern philosophy. They have, for example, dressed up their decadence and called it freedom of thought. I can thoroughly appreciate freedom of thought in its proper place. If a shrewd and fat Cardinal should let wisdom flow from his lips, at the end of a private dinner of course, no one would reproach him, but should he embody his words of enlightenment in a Lenten sermon, then the devil, whose existence he most unwisely denies, should take him. And what we promulgate under the guise of learning—as far as that goes, I, too, lean toward the positive—but when a dear colleague goes a little too far, ho, ho, . . . he soon runs off his horns and it goes no further than between ourselves. Freedom of knowledge, this humbug calls itself, as if there were such a thing. So go right on teaching whatever gives you any pleasure. I will help smother any little fire that might result from it. . . . That's immaterial. But, on the other hand, what does count is the method and that is—Force. . . . Force is the new gospel, which is really the oldest, and whoever sets himself against it will be shot down like superfluous game. That is what *he* does, and that is what we, too, should do, as far as our powers permit."

"What do you understand by *he*?" asked Sieburth, feigning lack of comprehension.

"Well, whom could I mean? Is there another man in the world whose name it would not be neces-

sary to mention? . . . This man—I hated him as long as he did not want what I wanted, but he conquered me. . . . Let him have his own way, I said to myself. He will succeed. . . . And he succeeded. Look at the rabble who of late again dare to besmirch him. They run up the walls like poisoned rats—aimless, hopeless . . . Empty, futile chaff, nothing else . . . I know you have never taken part, but you might some day feel inclined to participate, for, to judge from what one hears of you, or rather surmises, you graze in the fields where under the German oak trees the swine search for truffles and are glad if occasionally they find a puff-ball which bursts and spreads a stench of so-called democracy about it.”

Sieburth was amused at the drastic picture he painted.

“No, no, don’t laugh, my worthy friend,” Pfeifferling said as he raised his pipe threateningly. “Tragedy lies, like Cerberus tugging at his chain, close at hand. . . . He, himself, the great man, is responsible for the whole evil. . . . Why did he have to throw universal and direct suffrage before the mob like a bone to a dog? By so doing he made them conscious of their power for the first time. . . . This artificial bolstering up of ignorance will give us much trouble. . . . But it is high time that far-seeing intellects take a new view of life, and above all you, dear friend. And I will wait for that time,

silent and patient as your *Eckhart the Faithful* until your day of Damascus dawns."

Sieburth realized that it would be wise to leave elbow room for himself both on the right and on the left.

"You must have noticed, Privy Councilor, that I listened to you with warmest devotion. . . . I admire the powers of persuasion with which you champion your cause. Each of your words was a sword thrust, but there is one proverb among the symbolic words of Pythagoras which says, 'You must not stir a fire with a sword.' At least not that of one who thinks for himself. And for that reason I am afraid that I shall not be able to follow you entirely. . . . Up to the present time I have limited myself to playing the part of observer in political issues and during that time I have made the observation that neither platforms nor individuals ever achieve an influential position, only catch-phrases do. The man who fights for an idea might just as well throw it on the dung-heap if he doesn't succeed in coining a slogan that sufficiently warps, adulterates and exaggerates it so that even the most stupid thinks it plausible. And it seems to me that only the party that can create enough claptrap to convince the people at large that it is the embodiment of public morality, can hope for success. . . . With such an attitude, one cannot very readily fit into the political machine, and for that reason, I beg you most

earnestly to allow me for the time being to go my quiet way. . . . Which way I may turn at some future time, I do not know. At any rate I don't feel that I want to bind myself to anything until the time has arrived."

The Privy Councilor tied knots in his napkin-like beard, but he was not able entirely to swallow his disappointment.

"I can see that your skepticism is much too fastidious to hobnob with us lowly creatures of conviction. But as I have already said, I can wait, and when your erstwhile friends have exasperated you sufficiently by their fogysm, their flabbiness, their petticoat government and what not, you will knock at my door, behind which you may be sure you will always find open arms."

Sieburth thanked him; then the conversation turned to a scholarly topic which contained nothing of an inflammatory nature, at least not for him, but Pfeifferling stormed, blustered, hissed and spat as before.

When towards midnight he closed behind him the door of the house which had so suddenly offered him its hospitality, he breathed freely once more and felt as if he had escaped from a witch's caldron.

And little thought that one day he would find refuge and sanctuary therein.

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS TO BE WILL BE

THE household belongings of Professor Hildebrand had finally arrived, the young couple in the meantime having found a temporary residence in a boarding house. Two furniture vans filled with old-fashioned, curious things came, around which a group of gossiping women stood and gaped eagerly as they were being carried into the house. It was said that there was even a golden harp among their furnishings that, measured from the sidewalk, stood higher than a man.

And more was said about the extensive alterations that were going on inside of the house that were being undertaken for the purpose of creating an effect of unheard-of pomp.

In reality these extravagant changes consisted of breaking down a partition between two rooms and substituting two marbleized pillars as the library which the Professor had brought with him could not be accommodated in either of the two rooms which were now converted into one.

But even these modest deviations from the ordained building arrangements caused whispered comments, half of awe, half of disapproval among

university circles, who saw the spirit of strictest economy, heretofore the attendant attribute of the profession, being imperiled.

Sieburth was the first to become acquainted with the reason for the commotion.

One morning Hildebrand stopped him in the Faculty Room and said, "My wife will be frightened at first, because our home is still in terrible disorder, but I know she would wish it, so if you would care to have tea with us this afternoon, we shall both be happy to have you."

Sieburth made objections but they were quickly overruled and when he had completed his afternoon lectures, he went, minus flowers—for he did not want to seem to play the courtier—to the home of the Hildebrands.

The library, the salon-like expanse of which had again been minimized by a flower-embroidered portière suspended between the freshly varnished pillars, greeted him on his entrance. A favorite musty odor as of old cherry wood and of chests filled with lavender reached him. There were towers of books, such as all of them had, only spread over a larger area leaving a passageway clear which led to the far wall at the right and left of the pillars.

The writing desk, without ornamentation or roll-top, was like his own only that it was ingeniously arched and inlaid with yellow shining marquetry like those that were built during the Biedermeier period.

There was an old etching wherever there was an available space. The whole thing reminiscent in its stiff grandeur of a world which, by reason of his familiarity with court life, was not new to Sieburth.

Hildebrand, rising, stretched out his hand to him. "You are surprised at the surroundings in which I live," he said as he noticed Sieburth's wandering gaze. "My wife inherited a part of her forefathers' belongings. The castle in which she spent her youth went to the devil but what the previous generations had accumulated the children took away with them. History hems me in on all sides, through the eyes, nose and through the ears, for everything rattles, crackles and creaks as soon as you come anywhere near it. If I needed such a thing as inspiration, I should have a surplus of it right here."

"Why talk about inspiration?" Sieburth answered. "Concentration is the big thing and that I get from my oilcloth-covered kitchen table just as well, by which I don't mean to say that I don't like your working conditions much better."

At this moment the middle curtain was raised and the delicate slim figure of the mistress of the house appeared, leaning against the green pillar in a flowing white robe, which in these times of armored corsets and tricot waists, was considered a monstrosity but which made her look like a vision of a Byzantine cherub while the drapery of the curtain seemed to form towering wings.

But Sieburth instead of being carried away by the picture asked himself, "Why doesn't she come through one of the regular passages, either at the right or the left? Why between pillar and curtain unless it be because it creates a better effect?"

And now she came towards him and with the sunrise of her eyes offered him the trusting hands that were stretched in his direction.

"She has remembered our pact," he reflected, and became conscious of a flattering feeling of joy.

When she invited them to have their tea he found the solution to the manner of her entrance; right behind the curtain was a sofa, and farther behind that stood the perfectly appointed tea table. In all likelihood she was performing the necessary housewifely functions in connection with the table arrangements and had taken the shortest cut to the other side.

And while he inwardly apologized to her for his suspicion, he became filled with regret because the wish to please him seemed far from her mind. They seated themselves and she began zealously to prepare the tea, smiling all the while.

"Do you know, colleague," Hildebrand began, "that I looked forward to your coming with a certain amount of uneasiness?"

Sieburth asked the reason.

"Not only because, dull bookworm that I am, I have the deepest respect for you men in the department of philosophy, but because in this place you

seem to be considered a sort of intellectual devil."

"Why should that be?" Sieburth asked. "I interpret my Kant assiduously, keep myself free of any opinion of my own and make myself as insignificant as possible."

"That would seem to be the reason for it," said Hildebrand. "One suspects you of many things that one is unable to grasp and feels oneself led around by the nose."

"And yet I am nothing but a poor climber," Sieburth scoffed. "When, for example, I see you sitting here before me, I am filled with an absorbing humility because you too are one of those who will one day decide my fate."

Hildebrand laughed his hearty Bavarian laugh and a look of pride and of shame flashed from his wife's eyes to Sieburth—pride in him, and shame of the others into whose arbitrary power he had fallen.

Hildebrand, whose restless spirit seized upon every chance for controversial discussions, hastened to get on a scholarly subject.

"What impresses me most in you philosophers is that you know everything that has ever been thought of anywhere on the earth," he said.

"And not only that," Sieburth replied, "but we have to know everything that any one could possibly think."

"How is that possible?" asked the hostess, who in

the meantime had taken her cup and nestled in the corner of the sofa.

"Just as possible," Sieburth answered, "as it is for the merchant to take inventory when the new year comes. He knows that his store can only hold exactly so many pieces. Any additional ones that are counted are humbugs. Of course most of it is humbug with us, even of that which actually exists. In a moral sense every clothes jobber is a god as compared with us."

The hostess looked at him with alarm in her eyes, and Hildebrand laughed.

"That, of course, applies to everything that is metaphysical," he said.

"And to some other things as well," Sieburth answered.

"You seem to be an awful skeptic," said Hildebrand, turning away with a serious expression.

"If I only were!" Sieburth laughed, "for then I, like every faithful dog, would have my assigned place from which I could not be driven. Entitled to it, not only by predecessorship such as that of Pyrrho, Ænesidemus and Hume, but above all because of the human play instinct, for nowhere has this human play instinct dominated so compellingly or shown such bewildering results as in this skepticism. But even this play instinct must be viewed with skepticism or else it too will take on a dogmatic nature."

"Wait just a minute," said Hildebrand. "I must

first digest all this." And he pushed the tangled hair back from his troubled brow which he scratched with his bent fingers. His wife, however, folded her hands and looked at Sieburth, half in admiration, half in perplexity, through her wide-open eyes.

Then the servant girl came in and whispered into Hildebrand's ear so faintly that it fairly reëchoed from the walls that a delegation of students were there and begged permission to speak to the Professor.

He smiled a boyish and embarrassed smile. "You must really pardon me," he said, "I honestly didn't ask them to come here in order to show off my popularity before you; but youth plays a great part in our lives. I can hardly send them away."

"And you must not," Sieburth replied, rising. But Hildebrand quickly pushed him back into his chair with his unwithstandable fists.

"Please stay here with my wife," he said, "and try to listen to as little as possible of what goes on over there, for my method of dealing with these young people is, no doubt, radically different from yours."

With which he walked past the curtain and into the other room.

At the same time a door slammed, the same door through which Sieburth had entered; feet scraped, throats were cleared and an address obviously committed to memory was delivered. It dealt bluster-

ingly with the new star in the academic firmament, with the reviver of creative enthusiasm, with vernal gales sweeping over German soil and with the genius that evoked them.

The wife of the man honored in this fashion felt ill at ease. She impatiently bit the side of her index finger and threw timid pleading looks in Sieburth's direction, without finding the courage to begin a diverting conversation.

Sieburth felt sorry for her.

"Let them orate, madam," he said. "I have reason to be grateful to them for, if it had not been for them, I would not have had the opportunity to continue our conversation of the other day."

She did not answer but listened attentively, for just then Hildebrand started his reply; and though it may have been humiliating to admit, what he had to say very nearly tallied in expression and substance with what the spokesman of the students had said before him—there was not much difference. Naturally he repudiated all the laudatory remarks that had been made about him, but his comments too, were jubilantly enthusiastic and teeming with stars and genii.

Sieburth made a serious effort to give the impression that he considered this glowing rhetorical effusion to be of outstanding importance by staring straight ahead and avoided letting his hostess see the guilty look on his face. How easily a mutual under-

standing could have broken down the conventions with which they had surrounded themselves. But when at last he brought himself to look at her, he saw, to his astonishment, an expression of such tender emotion on her face, that he was touched by a love which could be so blind to weakness.

Then she rose and in a subdued voice said: "Come into the next room but please forgive the confusion in which you will find it. You heard him say that he prefers to be left alone with the younger element."

And she opened the door to a room where handsome Empire furniture towered like glittering golden mountains while on the walls, on which the paper-hanger's fresh paste still stood in sweaty beads, hung rows of family portraits darkened by age. Ladies with curls piled high under lace caps; men with their hair done in the fashion of Alfred de Musset and black silk cravats in which their necks were held as in a vise. There were even one or two with powdered queues in evidence, and another wore a full wig.

All of her ancestors whose blood ran in her veins seemed there to bear witness to all she said and did.

Sieburth quickly placed two gracefully constructed easy-chairs, whose arms were supported by cross-legged griffins, opposite each other.

"Do you know that I have just experienced a great fear?" she said, motioning him to a chair.

"What of?"

"Of the smile I expected to find on your face. Not having found it there, I am deeply grateful."

"Such surprise visits are well known," he answered, shrugging his shoulders. "True, I've never known them in my particular case, but then I am not one to inspire enthusiasm. For that reason I am all the more pleased to see it come to some one else. And be it ever so foolishly displayed, without it every era is doomed to freeze to death."

"I really wasn't thinking of the young people," she answered. "I was thinking of him. You would not believe how foolishly modest he is; how he turns every mark of appreciation away from himself and how anxious he is to be considered only as the servant of his ideas."

"That is something all of us would wish," he said, "but unfortunately most ideas are not so radiantly complete that we can put them on a throne and kneel as servants at their feet. He is all the more fortunate who can."

"When you speak I never know whether you are serious or not," she said reflectively, half to herself.

"I take my friendship with you seriously."

"And you must extend that so that it will include my husband too," she cried vivaciously, "now won't you? You see he needs you so—just because you are the exact opposite of himself. What he has too much of, imagination, impulse and fire . . ."

"I have too little," he interjected dryly.

"No, no, that isn't at all what I meant. Please, in Heaven's name don't misunderstand me. I mean, you could repress and clarify and bring him back to a level from which he could see actual values."

"It would be of much more importance to me to be of some use to you," he said, looking her straight in the eyes.

"Wouldn't you say that was included? Sometimes he seems like a child, my child . . . and that I was responsible for him; but then he flies from me, to heights far beyond my ability to follow him . . . then there I remain like the mother duck, looking after her baby swan."

"I've always pictured you as a sort of mother duck," he agreed.

Now she laughed heartily but would not be diverted.

"Don't always scoff, rather promise me that you'll gratify my wish . . . and if you're bound to know the truth, the fact of the matter is that I need you too. I was conscious of it already that night that we sat next to each other at Follenius'. Somehow I felt as though you were something that had been missing from my life for a long, long time . . . as if you were necessary to complete my life. I know you don't attach any improper significance to my confession or else you may be sure I shouldn't have made it."

She sat with her slender hands folded in her lap, her large sunlike eyes turned confidently on him, looking in her cherubic draperies a picture of spiritual defenselessness.

He felt his heart beat and his breath come shorter.

"Good God, what is coming over me?" he thought. "Will it be possible for this to remain a game, as it is with the Follenius woman? Doesn't it look as if it would develop into a passion, as though it were destiny?"

What had been a gentle breath flitting playfully about him at that dinner party now descended upon him like a hurricane.

"It will not be easy for me, madam," he answered, "to give you the desired answer and still remain an honest man. When a man and a woman join hands in such an understanding they can never know to what it may lead."

"I love my husband," she said, stiffening in reproof.

"And I love my work. I love it so that until now my every wish has been subservient to it. . . . How can I be sure that a friendship with you will not take me off my beaten track?"

"You ask me that to-day," she replied, "and yet you, yourself, asked it of me. . . . Was that nothing but an idle gesture?"

"Before I allay your suspicion, madam, I must

convert myself into the man I was then, and my answer is: yes and no. Yes, because you are so very worth loving, and No, because you are above love; all of which I surmised even then and wanted to grasp what was within my reach even if it was only a union of souls."

"Only," she asked smiling.

"At that time—only. To-day it seems more to me than anything for which I ever could have hoped."

"And why this change?"

"Do not ask me that. Nothing makes a man so utterly defenseless as to have a woman throw away her weapons of defense. When you say to me, 'I need you,' what else can I do but throw myself at your feet and say, 'Here I am?'"

A silence followed. She looked out of one of the bare windows and bit her lips. Obviously she felt that she had gone too far; that consequences were developing on which she had not counted.

Soon she turned back to him and said, "It looks as if our attitudes towards these things differ so radically that we shall hardly reach an understanding. What I want of you is something quite apart from what you seem to see in it. Am I too presumptuous, too naïve? I do not know. I only know one thing: That I would like to bind you to us, without domination, without coquetry—only because we hap-

pen to be thrown together here dependent upon mutual comradeship . . . to effect that we surely do not need big words, still less, big emotions."

"She is picking up her weapons again," he thought, and the emotion of blessedness she had aroused in him grew callous once again.

"My very warm thanks for the cold bath that you so hospitably prepared for me," he said. "You can depend upon me to rise from it as chilled as you could possibly wish me."

"Don't always take that tone, please, please!"

There it was again, that pleading, defenseless attitude that had so disturbed his equilibrium before.

"Is she playing with me?" he asked himself.

No, she wouldn't do that. Everything about her was real, genuine. It was only his warped, suspicious attitude that distorted her motives.

A highly deferential divination revealed this creature of another world who sat looking at him graciously and trustingly, for a moment in her true light.

And with the same reverence that he felt, he took her hand and imprinted a long silent kiss on it.

"Your husband is not coming and it is time for me to go."

At that moment he entered.

He came through the door with flashing eyes and cheeks flushed with excitement.

"Forgive me, forgive me, you above all, colleague.

I really could have sent the youngsters home earlier but it was such a joy to warm one's soul at the altar of their enthusiasm."

"As if you needed it," thought Sieburth.

"Once they have overcome their embarrassment a thousand sublime absurdities gush forth and you feel with delight that this is spirit of your spirit; for you were no different once yourself."

"Nor are you now," thought Sieburth.

Yet there was no scorn or condescension mixed in his feeling, at the most a little envy that he, being so harsh and bitter and hard, was not able to feel what had so moved that other.

"And now come," Hildebrand continued, "we will sit in our old places and continue our talk . . . Where did we leave off anyway? Oh, yes! You were discussing the human play instinct, and I had always thought that it was the thirst for knowledge which lent wings even to skepticism."

"Skepticism has no wings," Sieburth answered. "Be glad that you have them."

And with that he gave him his hand in leaving.

Hildebrand opposed this plan excitedly, but not a word urging him to stay came from his hostess's lips. And when she gave him her hand, no pressure, no movement of the limp fingers lying within his was even faintly reminiscent of the blessed hopes that she had raised in him.

With a throbbing head and legs that trembled, he

ran along the fortress walls where the dandelions gleamed in golden profusion amid the verdure of spring.

"What are you coming to? What is the matter with you?" Everything in him cried out: "How can you enjoy work, how gratify yourself with women, if you are filled with such a poison?"

And then suddenly there was envy. Not the smiling, harmless envy of her husband's strength and warmth of soul, but a base, sinister, petulant plebeian envy—he, himself, called it that—of the successes the other one achieved in drawing the students to him.

They came to Hildebrand in droves, while no one had been to see him in a long time.

No—there was one who had come. The lanky Cheruscan, the one with the glowing brown eyes who had not missed so much as one class during the whole term. What was his name?

His landlady must know.

And he made up his mind that he would call him to his desk after the next lecture.

"My only one," he thought, and loved him.

CHAPTER IX

THE ONLY ONE AND HIS FRIEND

AND so one day at the termination of the Kant class the Professor, in passing the seat of the Cheruscan Fritz Kühne, spoke to him and invited him to pay him a visit.

That, of course, caused great astonishment and all the non-fraternity students agreed that only a fraternity man could be the recipient of such a preference for they always had a drag.

Fritz had not dared to go to the Professor's house since that night of dissipation.

Now and then the participants still spoke of their mysterious companion but Fritz was careful to guard his secret. He felt himself lifted to a higher plane by the confidence of this idolized man, and though the Professor never showed him any sign of having so much as given him a thought, he never gave up the hope of being drawn once again into his charmed circle.

That hope had finally been realized, and another along with it; the opportunity of once more coming into contact with the young girl whose immature charms seemed interwoven with the obscure image of the teacher.

He had often watched for her, and he had met her on several occasions; but she had always been surrounded by friends so that he had been forced to pass by doffing his cap with the utmost politeness.

And now suddenly the opportunity to greet her, speak to her and to strengthen the ties between them, offered itself to him.

So after months he again started somewhere around vespers on a blossom-laden May afternoon for the house before which he had often stood in the dark during the icy days of early spring.

As he rang, his heart palpitated just as it had that first time, only he was not quite clear as to which one was responsible for it.

This time it was the mother who opened the door for him.

A tolerant smile of welcome spread itself over her tired features.

"You come much too rarely," she greeted him. "We were beginning to think you had gone into the interior. The Professor would certainly be pleased if you came more frequently."

He inquired with proper formality whether his teacher was at home.

"No, he has gone for a walk, but if you will come in for a little while . . ."

Oh, yes, he would like to very much. There was nothing at this moment that he would rather do.

But when he looked into the sun-shrouded mist-

iness of the room, he saw no trace of the one he had hoped to find.

"Helena is not at home either," said her mother. "She is with a friend of hers doing homework and will not be back until supper time. But won't you sit down?"

She motioned him to the corner of the sofa and sat down before the sewing machine between whose clamps a piece of household linen was pinioned.

"If you're sure I do not disturb you," he said.

"Certainly not," she said. "It is good for me to rest my eyes and my feet a little."

And then she told him about her work and about the linen shop for which she sewed and of the many hours she had to put in treading and straining. "For the seam slips so easily, and if that happens the whole thing is ruined."

Fritz asked why she did not give herself a little respite on such a lovely spring afternoon.

"I would like to," with a longing look at the curtain that shimmered like gold in the sunshine; the curtain that separated her from May, the world and life, "but the Professor might come home in the meantime and need me and if I were not here—no, that isn't to be considered."

A staring into vacancy with a wan smile playing about her face, resembling that of a maniac, revealed waste, resignation and sacrifice, which, either freely proffered or exacted, constituted her life.

Fritz noticed the finely chiseled nose, the almost unimpaired oval of her cheeks, the low unpretentious arrangement of her hair, the shining olive-skinned neck, the texture of which seemed to exhale the charm of premature fading, and he thought to himself, "How pretty this woman still is!"

But her clothing drooped about her worn and spiritless and the high, tightly laced breasts only seemed to accentuate the fading of her spare body.

"At any rate, one of us must be here," she continued as if awakening, "and now that Helena goes to the Teachers' Seminary . . ."

"Oh, then she did finish by Easter?" he asked recalling a previous conversation.

"Of course she did. She has always been a good industrious child and never the least bit frivolous nor inclined to chasing boys like other girls. I am sure I'll live to have great joy of her."

Fritz felt flattered as if the praise had been intended for him and since he wanted to find out on what street it might be possible for him to meet her, he questioned the mother about the friends with whom she worked and the information he received was so accurate that he immediately knew which corner would be the point of vantage.

Then suddenly her mother sat bolt upright and listened.

"He is here," she said with a nervous intake of breath. "May I announce you?"

He had already had two such experiences and yet he still felt his heart throbbing in his throat.

And then he stood before him.

Sieburth's face was reddened from walking and perspiration stood in beaded rows on his forehead.

"At last I've gotten you here," he said sprightlier and friendlier than usual, and even his handshake indicated interest and warm-bloodedness.

"I was afraid that the intimacies of that night of carousing had estranged you from me instead of drawing us closer together. I naturally assume, of course, that it was not a guilty conscience at any talking you may have done about it that kept you away."

Fritz was rather incensed at the implication that he might be guilty of such an action.

"I knew perfectly well that I could depend on your discretion," said the Professor, "otherwise I should never have stirred from my corner."

"Thank God that you did," Fritz laughed, "otherwise we should have been badly beaten up."

"The beating wouldn't have hurt you," he answered, "but rather the erroneous conclusion that you were not responsible for it."

"What do you mean by that, Professor?" Fritz asked.

"Each social stratum has its own forms of social intercourse with which you must be familiar if you want to mingle in it. Most of us are so arrogant

as to attribute that unfamiliar element in those we consider socially beneath us to a difference in emotional reactions. We hurl at them such reproaches as coarseness, callousness or brutishness thereby proving only our own inability to see beyond our noses. I'll admit it isn't easy to get our bearings down there where—to quote Hegel—Nature hasn't awakened to the fact that it has another side, and even I who spring from the lower classes can only with difficulty adjust myself to this sphere which is my actual home.”

“Are there then not wide gaps between emotional reactions?” Fritz objected mildly.

“Surely there are,” he answered, “but they exist equally among people of the same cultural background. In fact, strictly speaking, only the latter cases should be taken into consideration. In order to calculate the difference between two fractions, one must first reduce them to a common denominator. I discovered nothing in those sailors but a warmth of feeling for which I envy them . . . A few glasses of toddy and rock candy poured into these gaps of emotional reactions and they would have been filled.”

And since the occurrences of that night were under discussion, Fritz took his courage in his hands in an effort to relieve his heart of the weight that had oppressed him.

“There were things that evening that left a far

more uneradicable impression on me than that little encounter. May I speak of them?"

"Go ahead," he said, and laughingly settled himself in his chair.

"When you were discussing the day and night viewpoint in reference to the subject of patriotism it seemed to me, Professor, that you were not in favor of either; in fact that you sneered at both. Since that time I feel as if the ground had been pulled from under my feet. I no longer know my way in or out. Shall I hold with the Progressive party who see in Bismarck an enemy of German freedom or with the others who idolize him as the creator of the Empire? Once before you railed at him, and yet everything revolves around the question—for or against Bismarck?"

The glow that the exercise had stimulated vanished from Sieburth's face and the cheeks which had seemed fuller again showed their hollow shadows.

"I am sorry to have disturbed your peace of mind," he said, "but why will you regard these things from the political rather than from the esthetic angle? Your youthful imagination will admit of that . . . A champion as of ancient days who stands protectively before his age-worn king; this king who himself is a humble servant of his God who has granted him-might and victory and to whom he shows his gratitude by modestly and self-sacrificingly fulfilling his duty; the noble heir to the throne in a long,

blond beard, a heroic figure like himself . . . Truly, I already see the bards of future centuries striking their harps so that they may chant for an unpoetic posterity the new heroic legends that have meanwhile replaced those of Siegfried and Roland."

"And I see nothing but a very poor school poem for the next Sedan celebration," Fritz answered, half laughing, half mortified.

"Or if this point of view should not please you, although some of our greatest scholars espouse it, why must you obtain your slogan from either party? There are trains of thought so dark that even the Chancellor's most violent opponents have not dared to invade them; lines of thought which descend steeply into an abyss . . . And others again, so bright that every German enthusiast must be blinded by the glitter. Even the man who formed the Empire in his narrow, Prussian, small-minded fashion, would be appalled at the developed power which would immediately express itself in action if a Genghis Khan or a Frederick the Great should get into control. You have your choice. Help yourself."

Fritz, who in comparison with his former visits felt more natural and mature, interposed a word of energetic opposition.

"Nearly always when I have had the good fortune to be in your company outside of class, Professor, I have heard two widely diverging views of the same

subject and have therefore become more and more confused. Have some consideration for my lack of experience and tell me just once what you yourself think about these things in the bottom of your heart."

Sieburth pressed his lips thoughtfully together.

"What is thought?" he said. "Each bed of thought is made up for two, only in that way can anything new be evolved in it. But to express what one feels, most deeply and with the innermost urge, one need not resort to an antithesis. . . . And although I usually don't parade my feelings, I will be frank with you, because you have been so loyal to me. . . . We do well, dear friend, to regard the fate of Germany, in retrospect and in prospect, as a great tragedy."

"Why that?" Fritz asked frightened.

"One does not need to prove what one feels," Sieburth answered. "To be sure we'd have more than enough material with which to do so. Whenever Germany was on the ascendant, when a forceful welding bound the disintegrating parts into an iron band, or when even an internal balance was about to be established, the catastrophe at once was at hand. The Hohenstaufens ended in prison and on the scaffold; the Hapsburgs became the slaves of the Spanish priests. In the seventeenth century when the surrounding countries were in flower, the Empire, which also flowered, was engulfed in blood and fire.

Napoleon used it as a chessboard for his world conquests and when the Wars of Liberation finally were about to secure for it its place in the sun, its own princes destroyed all these hopes."

"But now," Fritz said enthusiastically, "we have our place in the sun which no one can dispute."

"Germany has, that may be, but I ask, has the German too?"

"What do you mean by that, Professor?" Fritz cried, without any idea of what he was driving at.

"And I ask further: Where is the German? There are said to be sixty millions of them, but I hardly detect him . . . Is it I who torment myself with these ideas, or is it you who sit down at the beer table with other demigods and because you have a few scars on your left cheek, look down upon every one who hasn't any? Or the working classes who believe in the gospel of Internationalism, or the rifle club members who call themselves old Democrats but who humbly march in front of the house of the district president or the manor lord and are happy if their patriotism is dictated by him. Yes, the district president and the manor lord come closest to it. They have received from higher up patent rights to their inane German nationalism which cannot relinquish its desires for serfdom and feudal rights and eschews the growth of any other sort of Germanism. In the cities, however, dwells a foreign race which is more and more gaining control of trade and

commerce and is incidentally preparing to direct the course of German thought. The former are not Germans, nor are these. Well then, where are they? Hemmed in between Wendish barbarism and Jewish intelligence they sit helpless and allow their intellectual decoctions to be brewed for them first by the one and then by the other, and are happy in shouting 'Hurrah,' all the while clenching their fists in their pockets. They are happy too if from the two dozen princely courts and two hundred dynastic castles some one occasionally condescends to them and by graciously extending his hand makes them feel that they are destined for higher things."

"No, no, no!" Fritz cried with painful resentment. "That is not so. It can't be so. I, too, know the people among whom I live! They are industrious, honest and loyal. They love the sincere and hate the hypocrite. They have hearts in their bosoms and are willing to fight. Surely, Professor, you only wanted to rouse me to contradictions, for that cannot be your true opinion."

Sieburth tilted his head back for a moment and closed his eyes as if they were tired. Deep furrows appeared on his face which showed Fritz how much in earnest he really was.

"And who says that you are not also right?" he then asked. "For the character of this people is just as tragic as its fate. It consumes itself in contradictions. It is at once obstinate and submissive, imagi-

native and dull, abounding in universal love and filled with malevolent envy, close-fisted and generous. I could continue enumerating these contradictions indefinitely. The worst of it is that it has once again passively suffered the destruction of what it most needs—the feeling of unity. So it has always been and will always be. The phrase ‘Enemy of the Government’ is heard on every street. Once it is tacked on to a simple peasant who cannot live without his mass and wants his chaplain back, and again to a decent tavern keeper who sold beer to people who were out of favor, to say nothing of the people themselves. And who was responsible for this defamation? He, your idol, who only has use for the German when he can utilize him as a plaything of his will. Don’t you see how he has molded him to his purpose during the decade in which he has been at the head? Big-mouthed—boastful—subservient to every one above him and trampling on every one beneath him. This whole crew of summer lieutenants and barristers and minions of the civil service down to the sheriff and the constabulary are only there to teach the German that they are the power appointed by God to have jurisdiction over him . . . And if you think that those who oppose his influence amount to much more, just have a look at the scurvy crowd that rant about free trade and protective tariff, the army budget and slush funds and are actuated only by a desire to fill their own pockets.

. . . 'Get rich'—that is the great slogan he popularized and for which every one lives to-day. Yes! when Germany was poor and torn and prostrate, every German was a king, and now that Germany is rich, united, and ruler of all the world, every German is a scoundrel . . . That is the doing of that Almighty One before whom all of you grovel in the dust."

Fritz felt as if the ground were crumbling beneath his feet. Twice before the Professor had expressed his vehement disapproval of the great Chancellor but those were only good-natured witticisms in comparison with the flaming words that now seared his soul. He realized that the image of his idol had been permanently sullied for him and that if he now struggled to find words to speak in his defense, it seemed to him no more than a farewell duty.

"But one thing you won't be able to deny, Professor," he said, and every word sounded like a plea, the plea that his idol should not be entirely shattered—"that he created the German Empire for us, and that for this at least we should be eternally grateful."

"It would have been better if you hadn't urged me, dear friend," Sieburth answered, and his customary smile again flitted over his spare face. "I see that it hurts you, and as I said before, it is not my habit to let my feelings run away with me. I spoke before of German tragedy and it was part of

this tragedy that the German Empire was not created by those who for decades had propagated this idea as their own, but rather by one of those factions which hitherto had been one of its bitterest enemies. For that reason perforce, a different result eventuated from that originally intended. It arose out of the stench of powder and of blood and this stench will cling to it whether it likes it or not, as long as it exists. Therefore, the growing preparedness, therefore, what one calls, in praise or in censure, German Militarism; therefore, too, the sword rattling the entire world over. And the worst of it is, it sprang into existence through a conflict with a people upon whose friendship, if we want to advance intellectually, we are more dependent than upon the good will of any nation anywhere around us. 'Ex occidente lux,' I would say in contrast to the old saying. . . . Now not only France but all of the West stand in open opposition and secret hatred against us, and the more we try to arm ourselves against it, the more intense it will become, and the more we shall appear as destroyers of peace and enemies of mankind in their eyes. How do we, we sleepy Germans, we, the so-called nation of poets and thinkers, come to be branded with this suspicion? And sometimes at night when I can't sleep, I think of a passage which I read in one of the minor prophets of the Old Testament and which foretells the fall of Assyria. It reads: 'And I will cast abominable filth upon thee,

and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her?"

"For God's sake!" cried Fritz, "do you mean to say that the same thing can happen to us?"

"I only mean to say that under Bismarck's régime, the German Empire is not what it gave promise of being and what the German deserves. By this I do not want to belittle what the man has done. He took things as he found them and he found Germany's tragedy along with the rest. And this inherent tragedy goes on. Incidentally this need not keep you from drinking your beer and being merry. Now, dear friend, you've looked deeper into my soul to-day than any one else who knows me. I expect you to keep what I have told you to yourself just as you did the secret of that bespectacled and bearded night prowler. Neither is for public consumption."

Fritz assured him that it went without saying, and after shaking hands went on his way . . .

Outside glowed the evening sun of May as if intent on tucking in the world under a purple cover. People steeped in crimson went laughing by. The walls of the houses were suffused with a blush as if they were guiltily conscious of all this springtime joy and their windows glistened as if they were made of rubies.

Fritz saw all this, yet was conscious of none of it, for the burden of all that he had heard rested too heavily on his soul for him to rejoice in these joyous signs of spring. This man who had spread all this gloom seemed to him like that Old Testament prophet as he forecast these coming misfortunes.

"If there were only somebody with whom I could talk it all over," he thought. But who was there? His fraternity brothers lived their carefree existence in complacent satisfaction. No matter how carefully he concealed the source of his worries, none of them could help him.

And as he was walking unsteadily along the walls and staring at his feet, he suddenly heard a girl's voice call his name.

There she stood blushing, dangling her brief-case on her left arm and stretched both her hands out to him in heedless welcome.

With that Bismarck's grim figure disappeared, Germany's problems vanished, and Nineveh was rebuilt.

Yes, he had come from her house, had been with the Professor, had talked for a while with her mother, and had been deeply disappointed in not finding her there.

Then they both recalled their winter walk along the fortress wall when the icy wind had blown at them through the loopholes.

"And do you still remember," she said, "how we

imagined green meadows and blossoming shrubs, and how we were going on a big picnic and never coming home again?"

"Yes, indeed," he said, "and now the meadows are green and the bushes are blooming and if we should want to go on a picnic, there is nothing to stop us."

"Oh! if only it depended just on wanting to go . . ." she replied. "But there would be so many difficulties to overcome, and I'm not at all sure that Mamma would consent."

"Look here," he answered. "I'm going to wait for you to-morrow at four o'clock at the Königstor, and if you don't come, I'll go home again."

"How long will you wait?" she asked, hesitatingly.

"Forever and ever," he replied, "one hour, two hours, how do I know? And if perhaps you should not want to come, you must keep thinking and thinking, 'Some one is standing there waiting for me.'"

"But that is exerting pressure," she objected.

"That's just what I mean to do," he answered.

"Then I had better say no right away."

"But I'll wait just the same."

So they parted, neither of them turning around.

. . . * . . .

On the next afternoon at the appointed hour, Fritz stood in front of the Königstor looking down the long empty street.

Classes and fencing had occupied his day but he had not been able to banish his talk with the Pro-

fessor from his mind. Only when he thought of the furtive happiness that was in store for him had his distress been mitigated.

The Kant class had been much as usual. Antinomies and transcendental analytics and such. Nothing thundered and flashed now. Kant's strict reasoning allowed of no side-stepping. Everything was logic and system and when he looked at the Professor, he was obsessed with a single thought, "That is not the real you; that is just a thought machine lecturing in your stead."

But when he looked around at his fellow students, they seemed so many bloodless shadows and he felt as if he were the only human being on those benches.

After lunch he had gone to the library and looked up the keywords "Assyria" and "Nineveh" in the encyclopedia but found little more than what he remembered from school.

And then his gloomy reflection again reverted to Bismarck who, in his mind's eye, was being converted into more and more of a demon, and a pain gnawed at him as if a dear relative had died or a friend had turned out a rogue.

But beyond all this loomed the anticipation of those hours they would spend together, beside which every tribulation sank into nothingness.

Then she came, really came, and had kept him waiting only a quarter of an hour.

She walked so quickly that the sultry wind blew

the folds of her dress backward showing the outline of her legs, shaped like those of a Greek goddess. A Florentine straw hat shaded the fair flushed face and blue silk ribbons whirled above it.

He was almost frightened at the tall, mature picture she made, so little resembling the half-child who had once greeted him on the stairway.

"So you did come!" he rejoiced.

"But I was right," she cried. "You did exert pressure on my conscience. I had only to picture you to myself standing there looking for me and at once I was on my way."

"And your mother?"

"Please don't speak of that," she answered, and because she raised her hands in protestation and looked at him with round, frightened eyes, he pressed the matter no further.

Without knowing how they got there, they found themselves in the country, leaving the churchyards on the right, walking along the walls and past the Dohna-Tower which lifted its circular walls imperiously into the air as if it did not realize that any insignificant cannon ball could sign its death warrant. They walked farther and farther in the direction of the upper pond, that elongated body of water which seemed like a great blue eye between dark lashes of underbrush and beckoned to them alluringly.

"How strange it is," said Helena, "that everything

we feared even to dream about has come true—and one isn't even astonished."

"One never wonders at what is most wonderful," he answered, "or else you would never cease being in a state of wonderment."

"What about?" she asked.

"About yourself," he replied.

Then she became really annoyed and told him that he ought to be ashamed of himself. She had not come to carry on a flirtation and, if he persisted in continuing with it, she would turn around and go straight back.

But when he pulled down a branch of a blooming sloe bush and put it in her arms, her good humor was once more restored and she let him talk as he would.

The road followed along the water for a while but then turned to the right so that they had to follow a footpath which seemed to lead nowhere. There were no houses anywhere in sight, only the gray walls of a bathing pavilion were visible above a thicket of reeds.

Several men occupied themselves with fastening the posts that the winter's ravages had loosened.

So they didn't approach any closer to it but prepared a comfortable retreat for themselves in the tall grass where they couldn't be seen even at very close range.

Warm, sultry gusts of wind swept over them and a blue-black blanket of clouds which was not very promising hung beyond the reeds of the farther

shore, but the sky above them seemed high and bright and fleecy lambs strayed across it.

So they did not worry about the distant threat, but keyed their hopes as high as the swallows, who flitted about the blue vault of heaven in search of spoils.

Each of them had uprooted a blade of grass and had twisted it around his finger in a ring. He whistled, she sang, and even though the songs were not the same they seemed to them always in perfect accord.

All at once they heard footsteps.

They were the men who had stopped work and were hurrying to get home.

They stopped singing abruptly and ducked as much as they could.

But one of the men discovered them anyway.

"Look, will you? What sort of a bird's nest have we here?" he said, and the others laughed and indulged in nasty jokes, which Helena, thank God, did not understand for she furtively joined in the laughter.

But soon they were gone and the world belonged once again to them alone.

In the meantime the wall of clouds had ascended higher and higher and in the same proportion the swallows transferred their hunting-grounds to lower zones.

Helena became worried and wanted to go home, but Fritz advised against it. "If there really should

be a storm, we will be soaking wet before we get to the first house, so it is the better plan to keep on lying here where we are so close to the bathing pavilion. At the first drop of rain we can run there and have as much shelter as we need."

That quieted her and she stretched herself out again.

Now it was no longer a blanket or a wall over there, but a black yawning chasm over which a sulphurous flame darted now and again.

And then suddenly a wet shower blew down upon them. Where it came from, no one could say, for the sky above them was still clear.

They jumped up quickly and ran and ran, over swampy meadows, over planks and stiles, past rushes and weeds toward the bath house.

The fence that surrounded it was closed but that didn't matter to them. In an instant they had climbed over it, and reached shelter just as the storm broke.

Laughingly they looked around the room in which they had taken refuge.

It seemed to be a packing or storage room. Beer cases filled with rows of the previous year's bottles were piled high, a sooty stove plate lay on the floor. Stovepipes and washboards leaned against the wall.

"It is uncomfortable here," Helena said, pointing to the dirty corners where all sorts of trash which

had been swept together in the fall had been piled into a discolored heap.

And as the really drenching rain had not yet set in, Fritz got hurriedly under way in the hope of finding a more cheerful spot, but there was nothing but the bath cabins which were in a long row, side by side, and one as narrow as another, with only a bench in each, scarcely large enough for two, attached to the rear wall.

"Hurry," he called to her, trying to make himself heard over the howling of the storm. "There's no use taking any time over choosing."

And then she came tripping along over the echoing boards, stepped into the cabin and threw herself on the bench taking up two-thirds of the space.

The storm which seemed to have waited until now broke loose with a vengeance, boldly and furiously as if it were determined to destroy the world once and for all. A swarm of hail stones rattled through the open door, covering the floor, the crevices and their clothes with their crystals.

Fritz hurried out, unhooked the door and locked it so carefully that the only point of attack that remained for the hail was the carved-out heart at the edges of which the icy grains were repulsed.

Now it was almost dark in the cell, only when the lightning flashed outside it illuminated the heart like a sacrificial fire and threw violet rays on their corpse-like faces.

"Why don't you sit down?" said Helena, looking up at him.

"I thought there was no room for me," he replied.

She moved quickly toward the side wall so that there was room enough left for him, but it crowded them both so that their shoulders and arms pressed close against each other.

They were quiet as long as the storm raged and the thunder roared so violently that they could hardly have raised their voices above it. But the fury was soon spent. The lightning found more urgent work to do in other quarters and the thunder only growled so as not to call attention to their departure.

The rain still beat down insistently but even its downpour seemed to be diminishing and no more rain drops blew in through the heart in the door.

Helena pointed to the door and said, "I think we can open it."

He acted on her suggestion with all possible speed and now as they again sat side by side the expanse of water lay before them in blue-black tints similar to the sky behind it, in a calm if still a little gloomy sheet.

The young reedlike bushes no longer quivered and already a drenched crow flew over the water laboriously flapping its wings, no doubt in the direction of the nest where its young, left to themselves, must have been anxiously awaiting its homecoming.

"Were you afraid?" Fritz asked his companion,

who had tilted her head back into the corner and was looking through half-closed eyes into the distances beyond.

"To be honest, yes," she answered.

"And you really didn't need to be," he laughed.

"One is often afraid without reason."

"In that respect you are right," he said, recalling the anxieties that had beset him since yesterday.

Then it occurred to him that she was a person in whom he could confide many things. She was the very one—the only one in the world. She knew the Professor. She loved and respected him as he did. Everything would be safe in her hands.

And he began to tell her about the conversation that had moved him so deeply and had completely shattered what had always been Gospel to him.

Germany's splendor had become a monstrosity, its hero a despot, and what distressed him most of all was that he no longer saw the proud oak tree, in whose shade all of them lived, in its former ever-green glory. Even now he seemed to see the ax hewing at the roots of the tree which would one day be felled if the evil neighbors felt so inclined.

"Do what I like," he continued, "I can now see things only through his eyes. I see dissension where there was harmony, cowardice where I formerly thought I saw enthusiasm, and subjugation—bondage—and what not? And in back of it all, fear—fear of what is going to happen."

"Yes, every one of us has his fears," she whispered.

"You, too?" he asked.

"And how," she admitted, "and the sad part of it is that there's nothing one can do about it and things go along their course just the same. One is consumed with worry and still finds no solution. It affects me just as it does you and there is only one comfort and but one guiding rule, that no matter what happens one must be good."

"Is that enough?" he said doubtfully.

"Perhaps not, but at least one knows what to think and to do when life becomes too difficult."

"What can there possibly be that torments you so?" he asked in earnest solicitude. "Nothing so very terrible can have happened to you."

She stared straight ahead in dejected silence.

"Don't you feel that you can trust me with it?" he pleaded.

She still hesitated and tried to make up her mind. "It is—yes, it is about—about the Professor," she stammered. "I could never bring myself to tell you and you were even angry with me about it."

"Is it what you heard through the wall?"

"Yes, that is it. And to-day I will tell you what it is but you must promise me not to think badly of him, and not of me either. Because it really is not proper for me to speak of it."

He promised everything.

"Well, then, sometimes when the sewing machine isn't going, mostly after dark, and even late at night, one hears—one hears women's voices through the wall. I should really say, girls' voices, but one can't tell the difference exactly, and Mamma gets excited and wants to send me out, but generally she doesn't dare because it would only make it more obvious . . . and then she sits down quickly at the machine and rattles away, but I hear more than enough. Giggling and screaming, and what all. In the beginning, Mother—for she felt she had to explain it away and I was so stupid—said that they were ladies who took private lessons from the Professor, but now she says nothing any more, only I am trundled off to bed as early as possible or I am asked to finish my work in my bedroom. She never allows me to go out into the corridor for fear of meeting one of them, but she worries herself needlessly on that score for he has his own entrance from the yard. His visitors must use that altogether for one never hears their footsteps on the front stairway."

She paused, exhausted from the weight of her confession.

"If that is all," he said, "I don't see why you should have to worry."

"Now you will surely think dreadful things of him," she stammered.

"I certainly will not," he answered. "On the contrary, if I were not already convinced of it, I would

only deduct from it that he is not a dry bookworm and that he feels as youth feels."

"Is that the way youth feels?" she asked with big frightened eyes.

He tried with some embarrassment to cover up the words that had thoughtlessly slipped out but her thoughts had already flown far beyond them.

"And even if that is so," she continued, "he has nothing in common with that youth which can give vent to itself at will. He holds an important and responsible position and an even more prominent one awaits him in which the eyes of the whole world will be focused upon him . . . And he has more enemies than you can imagine; he has often said so himself . . . Now if they should find out that he—that he—doesn't conduct himself exactly as an educator of youth should—can you imagine how they would take advantage of that? The full professorship would be lost to him then forever."

"Who would tell them about it?" he asked. "Not you, nor I, and as I know your mother, she least of all . . . As for the rest he'll be careful. So now cheer up. You must not be such a scared rabbit."

But she was not so easily pacified.

"That isn't all of it," she whispered.

"What else then?"

"I can't exactly express it for I'm not quite clear on it myself. The girls around here say this and that and one tries to understand . . . but one is

afraid of that, too. I don't blame him; he happens to be constituted like that . . . and he does no one any harm, at least he does nothing against any one's will. But if life is like that—that young girls not much older than I am—and they must have felt at one time as I do now—and have a mother, as I have, and go to him in spite of everything . . . then you think one should have no fear of the world and of life and mostly of oneself?"

She covered her face with her hands and a movement that was half a shudder, half a sob, shook her frame.

When Fritz saw her so upset, a reverent, almost paternal feeling came over him. He wanted only to comfort her and make her free of care; so he freed his arm that was pressed tight against her shoulder, put it around her other shoulder and drew her to him. Then involuntarily their lips touched and remained pressed to one another.

"Remember your word of honor," flashed through his mind.

But before he had the chance to heed the warning, she started in fright, and with clenched fists warding off the embrace, freed herself of his arms and stood before him.

Two eyes wide with horror stared at him.

"What's the matter?" he asked with a guilty conscience.

"I thought—we—wanted—to be—good friends," she stammered.

"Well, aren't we?"

She threw back her head sadly and with modest dignity. "Not any more," she said, "everything between us has come to an end."

He tried with many words to influence her to change her mind, but she hardly answered him.

And finally they walked home in silence.

CHAPTER X

THE GREAT HEGELIAN

A MIRACLE came into Sieburth's life. The great Hegelian whom no one had seen for years, and who in his seclusion had become almost a myth, had sent for him.

He stared at the lines, written in an unpracticed feminine hand which he had found on his table one afternoon on his return from class, with something closely resembling fright.

Wednesday at twelve-fifteen!

To-day was Monday. Two more days.

How could he come before this patriarch with an easy conscience when he had, albeit secretly and with due regard for convention, at all times fought against him, whom in his heart he had always called "the old idiot"? From where then was he to get the necessary reverence, and how muster up the appropriate attitude of worshiping humility?

Yet on the other hand, if one could credit rumor, he was the only one out of the entire Faculty who interceded for him at the time of his appointment when they, even though ineffectively, had opposed the wishes of the Ministry.

For this at least he owed him his gratitude. To be sure, since that first formal visit at the time of his assuming his appointment, he had not been invited to call; nevertheless, disfavor and ill will could not be the underlying reason for this invitation.

Perhaps, after all, reports of his antagonistic attitude had seeped into the old hermit's dwelling and anger and reproaches were in store for him.

At the appointed hour, with no little trepidation, he started on his way to see the great man who, even though he had renounced all authority in the teaching body, was still in the position, particularly in his case, to be a telling factor in the development of his future, for the reason that he was in line to succeed him, and the opinion of the predecessor was bound to have great weight.

His appearance lingered fairly well in his memory.

A narrow-shouldered frame of medium height, stooped forward a little . . . his beardless head protruding from a stiff high collar . . . oiled stringy curls straggling over the edge of the coat collar . . . narrow gray-green eyebrows and a tired pair of watery eyes below them, which gave the impression of being covered with a filmy skin and seemed to be searching his surroundings with labored effort and in a groping manner.

His voice had had a beautiful resonance. Deep and clear and calm. Once having heard it, one could

easily understand the spell he had woven with it for decades.

An old, none too clean, person reeking with the odor of onions and bacon opened the door and conducted Sieburth silently through the corridor to the study which he remembered from his previous visit.

There was a Dannecker bust of Schiller in the corner of the writing desk, rows of books that were badly cared for and in disorder in the bookcases, and the boards of the floor were uneven and uncarpeted.

The dividing door swung open, and the master of the house came unattended and with short and carefully measured steps from the adjoining room.

Usually when you see old men for the first time after a period of years, they seem to have shrunk noticeably. In this instance the opposite was the case. He seemed rather to have grown. His chest expanded in obedience to his strong will and his head sat bolt upright on shoulders that were well thrown back.

And then the voice which had lost none of its charm made itself heard.

"I do not see very much any more," he said, stretching out his hand to receive the handshake of his visitor, "so you must be patient with me, colleague."

And he pointed in the direction of the sofa while

he found the desk chair for himself, in which he had sat on that previous visit.

Sieburth thanked him and while he waited for the conversation to begin, he studied the face that was turned away from him and which seemed, with its lowered lids, to be far away and entirely without expression.

The mouth muscles had drooped further and his skin hung loose and wrinkled from his cheek-bones, while single hairs stuck straight out from his eyebrows.

"You were probably surprised," he began, breaking the silence, "that I suddenly sent for you. Often when I heard of your teachings and your mode of living I had the urge to do so, but I told myself that it would be difficult to avoid giving the impression that I was trying to influence or to interfere, and this intention was farthest from my mind. Now, however, I have come to the time when I must prepare for my passing on and it seems important to me that I come to an understanding with the man, who, despite much opposition, will very likely be my successor. Are you also of that opinion? If not, say so frankly, for we can talk on other manner of subjects."

Sieburth felt an absurd tenderness rising in him.

"What a comfort it would have been to me," he thought, "if I could have sat here now and then in the course of these years!"

And he said something along those lines only not so expressive of self-surrender.

His answer seemed to satisfy the old man.

"All the better," he replied, "even though we cannot retrieve the past both of us are still here and we can still exchange views. I know that among all the existing teachers of philosophy, there can be no two more diametrically opposed to each other than just we. The difference in generations if nothing else is responsible for that. If even the pupils who follow their teachers with pride find they must turn from their doctrines, how much more natural is it for men who at the very outset come—how shall I say—I don't want to say from hostile camps, yet when you come right down to it, that's what it amounts to."

"Our friends are largely the result of chance," Sieburth said, "and if I had my way, I would always seek them in the camp of the enemy."

The old man smiled indulgently, nodding assent. "You are right," he said, "only by the wounds inflicted on ourselves do we recognize the value of the person who inflicted them. Unfortunately most of them are poisoned. At least that was my experience when I still engaged in combat, for—in spite of all the glorification with which I was undeservedly overwhelmed here—no one was ever attacked with meaner weapons than I, and just by those who had previously called themselves my friends."

"Oh, I know," laughed Sieburth, "what, for ex-

ample, Bayrhofer and Michelet permitted themselves in their attitude towards you, Privy Councillor, no opponent of your school ever dared to attempt."

The old man raised his hoary head in astonishment.

"You are certainly accurately informed," he said appreciatively. "Yes, yes, indeed, that hurt me a good deal at one time. But let me tell you the secret of all struggle. It never existed! Even when you think it will cause your death—in the end you die of cancer or pneumonia or old age and what once was agony becomes amusement; sometimes not even that, so thoroughly does one forget it."

A shudder went through Sieburth's frame. "If that is the end," he thought, "what is it all for?"

"In any event," the other continued, "it has pleased me to learn of the considerate manner with which you have dealt with me since you have been teaching here. If it had been otherwise I would have had to deprive myself of the pleasure of seeing you here before my end, and just at this point I would like to make a request of you."

Sieburth listened in astonishment. What could this great old man who had countless eulogists at his disposal want of him, an unknown, uninfluential champion of theories opposed to his?

"You once wrote about Schleiermacher . . . he and I were never close as man to man although in

my youth I had a tremendous respect for him. Intellectually, only so far as—well, you know all about that . . . The esteem with which you, his avowed opponent, treated him was really my reason, at the time of your appointment, for— Pardon me, I did not mean to speak of that, I rather wanted to say that the foregoing is the reason for my coming to you to-day with my request that when I am gone you will also write about me.”

Sieburth started up. “That is too astounding,” he stammered.

“I know, I know what you want to say—that intellectually you are even more strongly opposed to me than to that amiable man of God . . . You would either make yourself impossible at this university or you would have to be a hypocrite and so forth . . . No, dear colleague, I ask no sacrifice of your intellect. Write what your heart dictates and if you employ the same good taste that you adhered to on that previous occasion, no one can possibly reproach you. It is primarily for the picture that posterity will form of me that I value the opinion of my opponent, for adherents generally make up for their loyalty by a patronizing arrogance, but with you as an example, they will feel in duty bound not to deviate from the path of respect.”

And he laughed to himself with bitter superiority like one who had played a trick on false friends.

“I am sincerely sorry, Privy Councilor,” said

Sieburth, "that you have had such unpleasant experiences in your own circle of friends."

"Oh, yes," the other cried, continuing to laugh in the same strain, "those who picture to themselves such a famous relic as I am, think only of the clouds of incense that envelop it and believe that it is continually surrounded by kneeling worshipers. In reality things are a bit different. When one no longer brings anything new to life's gaming table, one is rudely shoved aside. Suddenly all of our classroom wisdom is considered old-fashioned and what we previously accepted as our rightful tribute is soon converted into a charity donation. Some day you will have the same experience, my dear colleague, for that final verdict of history we do not hear any more and the fear that history may falsify the facts is the one worry that I take with me to my grave."

"If you can use the services of a man," said Sieburth with involuntary emotion, "who is your opponent, yet at the same time your admirer, I place myself at your disposal."

The old scholar, who, up to this time, had been sitting with his eyes half shut, opened them wide at these words and looked Sieburth full in the face. There was no longer a filmy haze, no cloud overshadowed those unseeing eyes as before, but in its stead, a bright radiance sent almost supernatural rays into space.

"I thank you for your consent, my dear friend," he said, and the gravity in his voice indicated how heavily the worry had weighed upon him. "I'll continue to show my gratitude in the future so far as the prison walls of my age will permit me. There is something gratifying, something almost like a deliverance I might say, in such an understanding, for you as for me. And if I were not a little *d'outré tombe*—a little, what shall I call it, beyond myself, I would take great pleasure in it. I should not have wanted to ask that other one who was appointed to a professorship over your head and who, in all likelihood, will deliver my funeral oration, which fortunately I won't be compelled to hear—he is too much like a jellyfish to suit me."

"And this jelly either melts or is turned to stone, depending on the situation."

"Take care, my friend," cautioned the old scholar. "The man has a vote and one which can turn the scale either for or against your appointment."

"I know, I know," sneered Sieburth. "I've been practicing that egg dance for many a year. I haven't broken an egg yet, but they could easily have become rotten in all this time."

The patriarch pointed his forefinger at him. "One question," he said, "which pertains to this and which actually burns into my soul. Why in the world don't you publish something? It wouldn't be diffi-

cult for you to take the wind out of the sails of those who are working against you."

"Now things are getting serious," thought Sieburth, but his confidence in the old man was so great that he thought he could discard his customary reticence.

"I am a seeker," he replied. "I have a feeling that changes will take place within me, the extent of which I cannot realize at this time."

"In what direction?" asked the former.

But now Sieburth reverted to his habit of silence, for he felt that that which was forcing itself into the foreground within him would hurt the old man so that he would hardly get over it.

The latter nodded his head thoughtfully.

"I understand your silence," he said, "and I understand too in which direction the way lies. Very well, take for granted that philosophical speculation has had its day; and often too, when I lie awake at night I hear the rats' teeth of the empirical sciences gnawing at our edifice. But do not revile this edifice, for it furnished two generations with a refuge in their longing for the infinite, and more than that, when the Church was crumbling, speculative philosophy built a dome of thought above it that stretched higher into the heavens than the Church ever had reached. Though it may have been only a delusion, man never dreamt more beautifully or more proudly."

"I will grant that," Sieburth agreed.

"And what will you men of pure empiricism put in its stead? What have you that will serve as a substitute? Your little odds and ends of biology, your haughty modesty in not knowing, and when all your mental processes are exhausted, the despair at finding that nothing means anything."

"This feeling of despair is a luxury," Sieburth answered. "Humanity has no time for despair."

"It is possible that work acts as a drug, but work requires rest and then what will you give humanity? With what truth will you nourish it when it feels that it is starving on your fare? And even if we have overstepped ourselves and find that we are not the gods into whom, according to our theories, the Godhead is converted—to me it seems even less worth while to turn ourselves into intellectual helots."

"I won't attempt to contradict you," answered Sieburth, "but I think that all this wrangling is useless. Our old foster-father Aristotle said, 'Knowledge is the sweetest thing,' and at this sweetness we suck like flies even if through this knowledge we die."

"And another foster-father of more recent date who calls himself Goethe said: 'That which is fruitful alone is true.' What do you make of that?"

"Very simple! Our foster-father Goethe made a mistake, that's all . . . like all those who measure

human seeking after truth by the amount of satisfaction it may give. For my part there is nothing I hate quite as much as the lie which coördinates things."

"So you would rather defend disorder?"

"If the truth could not otherwise be reached, certainly."

"One searches after truth and it becomes converted into wantonness."

Sieburth was noticeably embarrassed. "What do you mean by that, Privy Councilor?"

The old man nodded slowly like a Chinese idol and a smile played around the serious mouth that hid a secret fund of humor.

"I admit that was a leap of the imagination," he said, "rather drastic in fact, but now that it is made, I cannot retract it—and it is good that such is the case . . . and there isn't a doubt but that one must be nearly ready to die in order to tell you what is in my heart, and another in my place would not do it."

"To what is this going to lead?" Sieburth thought, a little disturbed, his anxiety nearly pushing him out of his chair.

"You see, colleague, you are in the beginning of the thirties. You are, so I have been told, economically independent, in a modest way, to be sure, but in that perhaps you are doubly fortunate. Why do you hesitate to enter into the ethical union we call matrimony?"

"Now you, too," thought Sieburth, and aloud he answered: "Because I only consider matrimony an ethical union when two souls tend to hallow each other and these two souls have not found one another in my life."

He felt a little twinge of conscience as he said this, for Cilly's name flitted through his mind, but almost immediately another name pushed it victoriously out of the way.

"I regret this all the more," countered the patriarch, "because I have been told that young girls have grown up in our academic set who would be eminently fitted to answer your requirements . . . but I must go a step further . . . no doubt there are dried-up bachelors to whom celibacy presents no dangers . . . by which I by no means refer to Kant, who is beyond the pale of any convention. You surely don't belong to these, as I know; on the contrary, I have been told that you enjoy your freedom to the fullest extent. This is not intended as a reproach, really not, and our colleagues or rather their wives who in such cases are the actual court of appeals, allow these irregularities to occur without passing too seriously upon them. But it seems to me, dear colleague, that an academic teacher, particularly a teacher of world wisdom, must show a proper consideration for— Why do you laugh, colleague?"

"I beg a thousand pardons, Privy Councilor," said Sieburth, who had not been able to refrain from

what he had thought was silent laughter. "I just thought of a passage in Persius, the Latin text of which I have forgotten—it is about a philosopher who had his beard stroked by a 'nine o'clock trollop.' It seems that hearsay makes such a one of me."

"But I give you the fatherly advice, dear colleague," the old man continued, "not to take these things too lightly. Many a man in society considers himself not only entitled but in duty bound to certain irregularities. The motives are many and they are called by high-sounding names . . . That works as long as it works but one fine day quite unexpectedly some foolish little thing, totally unworthy of notice, occurs and on just that thing one breaks one's neck . . . I would be very sorry, colleague, if that were to happen to you . . . Forgive me for my well-meant warning which I considered for a long time before uttering. And let me emphasize: Try an early marriage, you won't regret it!"

Sieburth said nothing. A dearly loved name rang through his soul and the horrifying obligations of marriage threatened to come between.

The anxious smile that covered his quiet humor again flitted over the old man's face that was furrowed by a thousand lines.

"It seems to me that in this moment I see you so clearly," he said. "Yes—that I can almost see into your very being. Your reaction has been the experience of many of us who didn't use matrimony as

a spring-board. One hesitates and chooses . . . that nauseating dandling of children, the nightly curtain lecture—the endless giving an account of yourself—the hindered thought processes—the gradual aging which, of course, one only notices on the other side, and above all the gradual neglect of outward appearance which finds its climax in the red woolen petticoat. One fights shy of all this with justification. And every one who has a lifetime of matrimony behind him can report similar experiences . . . And in the end one is left quite alone and everything that has annoyed and angered one lies five feet under the ground . . . Eleven years—yes, yes, eleven long years. One would think that in that length of time the feeling of loss would be eradicated or dulled, but in confidence, colleague, if there is one thing I long for in all this world, it is to be able for one little moment to hold that red woolen petticoat with that which it contained between my two hands . . . Yes, yes—that's how it is. Yes, yes."

He stopped and leaned his head on his quivering left hand and looked down with his sightless eyes as though he were dreaming.

This great scholar, the pride of the eastern provinces, whose patriarchal figure evoked enthusiastic homage as far as the sound of his name could reach, did not muse on his fame nor on his victories over implacable foes, nor on the bold doctrine of the divinity of the embodied Logos, in the organization

and rejuvenescence of which he had so actively participated all his life, but on a red woollen petticoat that had at one time been his abomination.

He remained a long time in absent-minded meditation.

Life only seemed to return in him when Sieburth rose. Also rising, he stretched both his hands towards him.

"We shall never see each other again," he said, "for I seem to hear the trumpet sounding my departure."

"Not so, Privy Councilor," Sieburth more than dutifully contradicted, "you whose spirit is so young, so full of unsapped strength in every gesture . . ."

"Calm yourself," interrupted the patriarch. "Why should I need solace? One who is presumably closer to you than to me—I mean Montaigne—said, 'To philosophize is to learn how to die.' What would we philosophers be worth if we didn't know how to perform this feat, the most trivial of all? God bless you and good-by to you, colleague!"

And with that the conference was at an end.

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One morning three weeks later the news that the great Hegelian had died was carried from house to house and from one lecture room to another.

The whole town, down to the shopkeepers and the radish women, mourned as it once had mourned for its fellow citizen Kant. He was buried with all

the pomp that *The Albertina* could, when the occasion demanded, display.

The "other one," the full professor, delivered the funeral oration which was rich in commonplaces.

"I will build him a better monument," thought Sieburth, who was sitting quietly in the background where the assistant professors had their places.

And his soul bowed low before the man whom he had once called "the old idiot" and who lay in a flower-laden casket in the middle of the auditorium.

CHAPTER XI

TO SHORES UNKNOWN

For a long time Sieburth did not know what name to give her.

"Hermione" was too long and sounded a little stilted.

Her husband called her "Herma."

He did not permit himself the liberty of doing likewise but gradually his misgivings subsided and when finally they were completely overcome, the short metallic appellation rang continually through his ears.

For he thought only of her, morning, noon and night; even when he was with a girl—he always had half a dozen of them on the string—her image persisted, smiling, forbearing, always with him.

There were among them sweet girls whom he liked no less than before, but they were so radically different from her in their entire make-up and behavior that when he tried to project her personality into theirs the experiment always ended in vexation and disappointment.

So he preferred to send them home again with some little token in consolation and in the end lived entirely without them, a model of virtue at which he himself scoffed soundly.

But his work did not suffer. On the contrary, he needed only to say to himself, "What would she say to that?" and the thoughts would tumble out one after another in unlimited profusion.

But she alone did not dominate this sphere. Often her image seemed to amalgamate itself with that of Cilly and frequently he found himself talking with Cilly instead of to her.

He had never really stopped to think whether she could or would interest herself in his field of endeavor. There was no doubt that she lent herself whole-heartedly to her husband's work but his particular branch of learning did not require much training in logic; and even though it may often have been ever so dry, with a little application it was within the scope of any one's ability.

In those blessed days of early summer he completed the intellectual scaffolding for the "Three Stages of Ethics." There wasn't a gap or a sagging spot in it. Everything was well placed and systematically arranged and the working out became child's play. If all went well, he could count on finishing it within the year.

In the meantime he rarely saw her.

He was invited there just once for an evening and during those hours, great as was the joy he experienced in sitting at her side, he had not been able to speak one unguarded word to her in all that time. Her husband carried on the conversation which nat-

usually dealt with the present-day political issues and which abounded in snares and pitfalls that were not always easy to evade. And yet it could not possibly serve his purpose to make a frank avowal of his heresies.

When the discussion turned to the struggle between State and Church in which Hildebrand lined himself up with staunch devotion on Bismarck's side, Sieburth discovered quite by accident, that she was a Catholic and attended Mass now and then. Then it occurred to him that he too was a Catholic and when he mentioned it he noticed that a happy smile illumined her eyes.

So another relationship was established between them although he had made no further use of his religion since his confirmation.

On his way home he said laughingly to himself, "Now all that is lacking is that I suddenly discover that I, too, have a believing heart and run to mass every morning; then I would be as romantic as the *Carbonaro* who washes himself in holy water before and after each murder he commits."

But the thought that by resorting to this method he could so easily meet her would not leave his mind. It would be easy to figure out by which street she came and if he found out at what hour the service began and timed his walk accordingly, the rest would work out of its own accord.

But he was ashamed of himself. He was a man

of thirty-three and did not want to behave like a schoolboy.

One day, instead of meeting her, he ran into his old friend Marion.

She, who usually came by carriage, met him in the Königsgarten dressed in a light-colored spring suit, rosy, smiling sweetly, yet with the sharp glance of one searching for something.

"Well, does one actually see you again during this lifetime?" she said as she stopped and offered him her white-gloved hand.

"I had hoped to be invited," he answered, trying to pull his head out of the noose.

She laughed aloud. "You might easily have helped those hopes along after having been unavoidably absent on two or three occasions. You have not called on me once except for a trivial bread-and-butter visit at which my husband was present. Will you finally condescend to make up for it?"

He dutifully told her that he was hers to command.

"It seems I've misunderstood you a little," she answered, "therefore I won't write you any more. In the future you will have to express your own wishes."

Obediently he said that he would and a day and hour were stipulated.

"That will have to be lived through," he consoled himself after bidding her good-by, trusting to the

adroitness that had helped him out of more than one difficult situation.

When he looked after her, the only really elegant and unprovincial woman in the whole town going on her way like a picture of distant splendor, conscious of her beauty and power, he had to admit that she perhaps was the loveliest of them all. If voluptuous femininity in Rubensesque colorings, with longings that were suppressed and yet glowed enticingly, should be given the preference over any other combination of womanly charms, then she surely had earned it.

All that was needed was that he should still love her, but that was a thing of the past.

But she held tightly to him. More insistently than if the bond she had formed had been fashioned out of the most stringent promises or actual experiences.

Two days later he was on his way to her.

He brought her roses, as he was accustomed to doing, and she accepted the gift with a weary smile concealing a resentment which he would never have attributed to his ever-kind hostess.

But when she herself prepared the tea, for she did not like servants about her, she was herself once again, placid and peaceful, exuding the gentle, radiant charm that she always spread about her.

Her blond hair covered her forehead while before it had fallen in loose waves from the part in the

middle. She had followed the dictates of fashion and had cut bangs while in other days she had been proud of her individuality and had refused to fall into line.

And then Sieburth asked her the reason. She curled her lips and said, "Because it has become almost commonplace to be anything out of the ordinary."

At whom was this aimed? At Herma perhaps? She was the only one in this provincial spot who dressed according to her own ideas. But he was very careful not to bring her name into the discussion.

But Marion guided the conversation in her direction.

"Since we are speaking of the unusual, how do you like the Hildebrand household?"

"I haven't as yet had the opportunity to look about in it," he replied warily.

"I've heard quite the contrary, that you were on very intimate terms there in fact."

"If two visits are an indication of intimacy—"

"In your case—yes."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because you possess a master-key with which you can break in wherever you think it worth while."

"And where would you say I had broken in?" he asked laughingly, even though everything inside of him was turning to anger. "Here, perhaps?"

"Well, what next, I wonder," she said in reply,

and looked at him patronizingly through half-closed lids.

This banter which was ostensibly in fun was becoming hostile and he decided to make an end of it.

"Dear friend," he said, "the mere fact of my staying away cannot be the cause of your irritation. Sometimes we have not seen each other for a much longer stretch of time and it has not hurt anything. What is it then with which you want to reproach me?"

But it did not suit her to be questioned. All that she would admit was that she did not believe that his work, which he gave as his excuse, was his only reason for remaining absent.

"What else should it be then?" he asked.

"My dear Professor," she answered, and the lovely hauteur which was the chief characteristic of her make-up radiated from her face, "we are two free people. Nothing holds us together but confidence on my part and a cavalier's duty on yours. I shall never forget the service which you performed for me, but that might be the end of it, and only to reciprocate would I now like to do something in your behalf. So if you have any use for my good offices, you know my address."

He thanked her, touched, and thought, "What can she have in mind?"

"At one time," she continued, "I thought the hour had struck . . . when you seemed interested in Cilly

Wendland, and I did my best, with due discretion, of course, to smooth the path for you, but that seems to have been a mistaken conclusion; at any rate, I didn't notice that you followed it up any further. . . . If we are really good friends, I think it would be wise were you to tell me how you really feel in the matter."

That seemed like pointing the pistol at his breast, and yet it was a feint.

"You are developing more and more into my benefactress, Madam Marion," he said, "but forgive me if—if—" He hesitated. That lovable and fine young girl was too good either to be disavowed or to serve the purpose of pretense. On the other hand, nothing seemed as essential to him as to hide his feelings for his new friend. In the final analysis the simplest solution was to harness Marion herself to this problem and let her think what would flatter her vanity most.

With poorly concealed curiosity she waited for him to continue, and when he remained silent, she said mockingly, "You are not usually at a loss for words."

"If I—if I—only where you are concerned . . ."

Already she brightened up—so that was what she wanted.

"In short, I beg of you not to urge me to go on, for anything that I might say would overstep the

bounds within which, in justice to you, I must remain."

That was plain enough, and yet obligated him to nothing.

She looked at her finger-tips with a satisfied smile.

"I don't quite understand you, my dear friend. To which boundaries do you refer?"

So, she wanted to egg him on. What had gotten into her to-day that drove her out of the customary reserve within which she had so long felt at complete ease?

But he was not the man to allow himself to be caught by it.

"I will be careful not to make any sort of confession to you, my princess," he answered, "lest the coolness of which so many complain should extend itself to me."

She sat, her hands folded in front of her, staring into the empty tea cup. He saw how her desire to divulge confidences fought with her pride which bade her be silent.

At last she found a reply. "You speak of my coolness, while you exude an aura of ice. My friend, you are playing with me."

And she rose brusquely.

Almost frightened, he realized what was going on. And in order to salvage what could still be saved, he said, "For God's sake, Marion, what have you against me?"

But she did not answer him. She walked up and down the room, her hands behind her back with almost manly tread. He stood behind his chair, waiting. She acted as if he were not there.

"Well then, I'll say good-by," he said, shrugging his shoulders.

Then she stood squarely in front of him, looked up into his face with lids that were pressed tightly together and said, "It will be best if in the future we discontinue seeing each other alone since it only leads to misunderstandings."

"Have I given you cause to feel that way?" he asked.

"If you can't feel it yourself, dear friend . . ."

"I can only feel that I am being thrown out."

She made a move as if to grasp his hand. "No, no, you must not put that interpretation on it. You really mustn't. Let me know any time you feel you'd like to come. But don't for a moment think that if we go on as we are now anything good will come of it."

Then she laughed a hard bitter laugh and this time really gave him her hand and rustled past him, accompanying him to the door.

Perplexed, he took his hat and coat out of the closet.

"Another such conquest—" he thought.

But God be praised, she, she, she had been kept out of the game!

And the desire to meet her became stronger in him each day.

He, who, because he worked through the night, needed his morning sleep and at all other times only rose when the hour for class was dangerously close, was now awake already at six o'clock and followed, minute by minute, the course she would probably take on this day.

Now she is here, now there, now slipping through the church door, now dipping her fingers into the holy water—and so it went on and on.

Until, one morning, he was no longer able to stay in bed, or even in the house.

The red gold of the early morning took jubilant possession of him. Every shambling schoolboy, every driver hitching up his team brought him hope.

Then it suddenly occurred to him that Mass was read several times during the morning and that he did not know to which one she went, if she went this morning at all.

Well, then, he would simply have to depend upon his luck.

And he was lucky. After he had walked back and forth between Tragheim and Sackheim for half an hour, he actually saw her coming towards him.

She had a mantilla thrown loosely over her shoulders and not even a hat on her head.

When she recognized him she was somewhat taken aback. Then a flush of sheer joy spread itself

over her olive face and in her eyes glowed the fire of the sunrise, which was what he liked most about her.

"But, Professor!" And with this salutation her hand found its way firmly into his.

"You have turned me into an early riser, dear madam. Now that I know that you are on your way already at this hour, I am ashamed of my laziness."

"Even though I don't believe you are lazy," she answered, "it seems to me you are sensible in getting up early, for this view isn't to be had much later."

And she pointed full of rapture at the light-blue curling surface of the water on which the purple morning mist was rising.

No, she had no inkling that he had waylaid her and accepted him as her escort without the slightest hesitation.

"When I get home now, my husband is just about ready for breakfast, so he doesn't miss me at all. On the contrary, he likes to be alone with his thoughts when he gets up in the morning."

"My husband," and again, "my husband."

"But you must not get the impression," she chattered on, "that I am so intensely religious; this half-hour of church is like a morning bath, and a cherished habit dating back to my childhood days. One sits and thinks and plans one's day as though it were a work of art."

"You happy woman," he said.

She sighed. "No, no," she answered, "happiness is not as simple as all that."

A breath of hope stirred within him and she continued. "If I were altogether at peace with myself, I would not need to pay these early morning visits to God. One worries about many things and in the end comes to the conclusion that most of it is nothing but selfishness."

"And even if all of it were selfishness, you would still be entitled to it."

"You are in a position to say that," she answered, "for you have nothing in the world to think of but yourself—or rather nothing but the work that you want to accomplish. But a person like me! If I did not serve, what would I be worth anyway?"

"Dear madam," he said, "this mutual walk is too short and too casual for such weighty questions."

"You are right, dear friend," she answered, "and when I recall our last talk to my mind, I know that you are doubly, yes, even triply, right . . . and I must confess that the wish once to talk with you quite alone has not left me since that time. There is so much that I want to discuss with you and ask you and that—but such a getting together is not easy . . . If I were to tell my husband that I wanted to go to some specific place with you—to Luisenwahl, or further out into the country, he would think it perfectly proper, for he knows who I am, and besides he is not narrow in his ideas; but one has to use some

discretion, for in a village like this—it is nothing but a village in spite of its hundred thousand population—gossip can overtake one, one doesn't know how violently . . . I don't care on my own account, but my husband's honor rests in my hands."

"As yours would rest in mine," he said, "and for that reason it seems I must forego the pleasure."

"That's how it is," she assented. And then with a sudden inspiration, "What do you do during vacation?"

"Vacation time is nearly two months off," he answered. "By that time I may be a complete stranger to you."

"Have you so little confidence in our friendship?" she asked.

"If I can have more of it, I shall be happy."

"You could come to us often, evenings. I thought you would, as a matter of fact . . . if only on account of my husband . . . you came just once, and then never again."

"Even that was observed," he said.

"By whom?" she asked quickly, and with fright.

He shrugged his shoulders evasively. "What does it matter?" he said. "But it happened. . . . And what do you do during vacation?"

"My husband is an enthusiastic mountain climber," she said, "and I, in the meantime, usually hang about the mountain hotels, on account of my weak lungs. For that reason, I'd like to leave him alone for a

couple of weeks and perhaps accept Mrs. Follenius' invitation to spend the time with her in their sea-shore villa at Cranz."

Now it was his turn to be frightened. "She thinks she can make her innocuous," he reflected, "by taking her under her wing."

But he was careful not to discourage her. He only said, "I would have less of you there than here for every one there feels in duty bound to do police duty."

"Then there is only one thing left to us," she said.

"And that would be?"

"That you come with us to the mountains."

Then he was taken aback again, only this time it was with the joy of elation. A whole tower of happy events built itself before his eyes, the very sight of which made him dizzy, but simultaneously he realized that this expedition of three, no matter how it might turn out, would destroy her reputation for all time.

The Follenius woman would see to that.

"I thank you, madam," he said, trying to conceal his excitement, "but I don't believe that I dare accept."

"Oh," she said, disappointed, "and I had imagined it would be so nice."

"Nice," he thought, "only nice?"

Of course, women are actresses in that they belittle and treat as coincident that for which they

secretly long. In that way they steer ahead with less danger.

But this one did not steer. She allowed the wind to blow over her without asking where it was taking her. She was that sure of herself.

They had already reached the house in which she lived and had passed and repassed it two or three times in talking.

"Come soon," she said finally, giving him her hand in parting, and then disappeared behind the door.

Living in a sort of trance, toying with plans which he destroyed almost in the moment of their inception, seeing them clear and confused simultaneously, delighted with the hour luck had granted him and yet dissatisfied at not having made the most of it, he went back to his lodgings where the necessity to calm himself and pull himself together became imperative.

For his Kant class started at nine o'clock.

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The next weeks passed without the development of anything in the least out of the ordinary.

Everything was hastening into bloom and the linden trees were already budding.

Sieburth worked at top speed for he must conquer and curb the desires that threatened to destroy the very roots of his soul.

Marion Follenius gave no sign. It seemed as if that separation was an accomplished fact.

"It is all right with me," he thought, and was glad not to be in her debt.

The one person he missed, outside of the one, naturally, of whom he thought in every waking hour, was Cilly.

He had stopped calling at her house and had not been invited again. This might have been unintentional, for the social season was over.

But formerly he had talked over so many things with her, such rich currents of thought had coursed between them that their cessation seemed unnatural and provoking.

"If a man and a woman mean something to each other intellectually," he thought, "why does this marriage question always have to come up?" But custom demanded it, and he had no wish to be branded a deceiver of family hopes.

One day was like another. Mrs. Schimmelpfennig brought his lunch. Mrs. Schimmelpfennig brought his dinner and he hardly saw her. Only when Helena accidentally brushed past him did he look up, and he enjoyed the sight of her budding youth.

He felt no desire to see his favorite pupil although he saw him sitting in front of him almost daily. In fact his eyes hardly greeted him in glancing past. There was nothing on earth he wanted

except—no, he did not actually want her. He often admitted that to himself, as contradictory as it must have seemed. Everything was right as it was. Any further intimacy would only destroy his peace.

He saw her husband practically every day, even if only from a distance. One might just happen to be talking to some one else; one exchanged a nod or if one happened to be passing one gave a hasty handshake.

Until, one morning, the other one came up to him and with a smiling reproof in his voice said, "Well, have you forgotten us entirely? My wife asked me to tell you that she will soon be angry with you."

This message created such intense joy that it would have been a crime to offer an excuse, so he accepted the invitation for the following evening.

So once again the three of them sat about the round table. The La France roses which he had brought glowed in the silver bowl and the failing light of the setting sun made the shade of the hanging lamp glitter like fireworks.

"Your days here in the north," she said, "terrify me. It looks as though there weren't going to be any night at all, and when the twilight doesn't seem to end, you fall into a sort of state of intoxication and think you can skip sleep altogether."

"I would not advise it," Sieburth answered. "I do it sometimes myself because by rights I'm nothing

but a night owl but how I manage to get through my class the next morning, only the gods know."

"And with me it's just the other way around," said Hildebrand. "I belong to the category of song birds. When it gets dark, I stick my head under my coat and go to sleep. You may even see that happen to-day, under certain conditions."

"You wouldn't do that," she exclaimed in playful threat.

"Who can tell?" he laughed. "*C'est plus fort que moi.*"

"Then the rest of us will have to go around in felt slippers," said Sieburth.

"On the contrary—not even a cannon shot could rouse me. . . . *Ad vocem* felt slippers: There was once an order passed in the convent at Heilsbronn that every judge of the penal division was to receive a present of a pair of felt slippers whether he needed them or not. Don't you find that ingenious?"

"Certainly," said Sieburth. "Justice has always moved stealthily."

"Even when she has enforced the penal laws?" asked Hildebrand. "When, for example—"

And already he had set sail full tilt on the vast sea of Germany's past.

An immeasurable store of highly specialized knowledge welded into a comprehensive scope and converted into sound hypotheses which through keen analogies opened new vistas, seemed to stream out of

him. He himself exhibited such a childlike joy at the functioning of his intellect that involuntarily one became infected by it and reacted in proportion to one's own limitations.

It afforded the logician and psychologist particular delight technically to inspect the labyrinth of his thoughts and to segregate into abstract rows that which was intuitive.

Sieburth not only participated in the discussion when he seemed to be in error, but often seconded him and drew his conclusions before the other reached them.

And then Hildebrand would open his eyes wide in astonishment—regular child's eyes they were, in which one could read undisguised admiration.

Perhaps she had been right. They supplemented each other; they needed each other and Fate had predestined their friendship.

She sat beside them with a smile of silent triumph, listening to what each one in turn had to say, and almost seemed to be equally proud of both.

They had left the table long ago and had hardly been conscious of it; the cigars glowed, the lamp which had smoked when they first sat down had been turned lower, and through the open window one heard the song of the nightingale ringing through the roseate twilight.

Then suddenly, almost as he spoke, his head dropped to one side. He stammered, yawned, and

in the next instant, without leaning on or against anything, slept the sleep of the just.

She jumped up immediately, pillowed his head on the arm of the chair and adjusted his hands on his lap.

Sieburth wanted to leave, but she earnestly begged him to stay.

"He would be unconsolable if on waking he were to find that because of this he had driven you away."

She sat looking at the sleeping man with unbounded love in her glance and a tender concern in her strained smile.

"You see, he lives with a thousand forces," she continued, "and it is their power, or perhaps I should say his joy in the possession of them, that makes him so tired. In ten minutes he will wake up, and one does well to act as if nothing had happened. . . . If you come oftener, you will experience this frequently."

"But it did not happen the last time," Sieburth said softly.

"You were more of a stranger to him at that time and he made a more serious effort to keep himself in hand. What is more, you can talk as loud as you like, for he won't hear you even in his dreams."

Then she got up and closed the window.

"The cool air is coming in," she said, "and who knows but it may be bad for him?"

And then as she seated herself again, she said,

"Sometimes when I grieve because I have no baby, I console myself with the thought that he is my child but I believe I told you something of the sort once before . . . but besides that, I think that to watch over something so godly is a life work which precludes the undertaking of any other. Don't you think so, too?"

"You may be right," he answered, "but it hurts me."

"Certainly, because you are so alone," she said, "but why are you—alone?"

"No, that isn't it . . . because you need nothing, nobody—not even a friend."

Her two sunlike eyes opened wide. She looked at him with her expansive, honest expression.

"But I do," she said. "You know that I need you."

And as he shrugged his shoulders dejectedly, she went on assuringly. "No, no, seriously! I don't know myself how it happened but whenever I think of you, I feel: 'I must talk to him, I must talk to him' . . . what about, I don't know myself . . . But there must be an emptiness in me, a great hunger . . . which only you can appease. That is not doing him an injustice, is it?" She leaned forward and stroked the hand of the sleeping man. . . . "I would really like to tell him, but it might disturb him, so I'd rather keep it to myself . . . Please, please, be his friend, I beg of you."

"I am that," he said almost to himself.

"No, no, you are not. I feel through it all that you are thinking only of me. If I were inclined to coquetry it would flatter me; as a matter of fact it does, a little, but not very much. More than that, it frightens me. While if you were his friend, quite inadvertently a little would fall to me and with that I would be satisfied."

"I will be," he answered, while a sort of painful resignation seemed to strangle him.

He looked at the sleeping man who, with a peaceful smile on his face, was leaning his blond head against the arm of the chair, and what welled through his head and heart was almost in the nature of a vow.

Then he rose.

And she detained him no longer.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHAMPIONS OF FREEDOM

THE summer term was drawing to a close and the lectures neared their end to empty seats.

The unregistered students were the first to remain away, but even many of the regularly enrolled dropped out before certificates of attendance were granted.

One day even Fritz Kühne was no longer to be seen. Small wonder! There was an article in the newspaper announcing that the Cherusicans were celebrating their summer festival before the close of the term at Rauschen. He could hardly have missed that, the torchlight procession around the village lake, flaming bonfires high up on the very pinnacle of the dunes and a dance on the green until all hours of the morning.

An immeasurable quantity of contentment and the joy of youth spoke through those few lines.

Rauschen—the very name conveyed floods of ocean and wind, happiness and sunshine, solitude free from disturbances, of thought orgies unintruded upon by the commonplace to him who sought refuge there.

To be sure, the place was hard to reach, It was a

ride of several hours through sand and heaths; there wasn't even a carriage service that came and went at regular intervals.

From there to Cranz was an eternity and even the near-by Neukuhren seemed worlds away.

Even so, one must risk it.

And when Sieburth inquired and investigated, he was informed that a small house that was remote, situated between the pond and the shore, built by the family of an official who had been called to the interior, was still unrented and could be had for a nominal sum.

Not much looking around nor much thinking it over, and it was his.

And Sieburth took it, glad to be hidden away for the vacation time.

But he did not get out of town as easily as he had hoped.

One morning shortly before the close of the term, Professor Auerbach stopped him and said, "You remember, dear colleague, that some time ago you promised to participate in a meeting of the newly organized Progressive Association. The Diet elections are practically at hand. We must get to work or else the Reactionaries will get the upper hand even in a town which is a stronghold of Liberalism, or the National Liberals will reap the fruits of our labors."

Sieburth gave his contemplated journey as an excuse.

"Where are you going?" Auerbach interrogated.

"I've rented a place at Rauschen," he said with some hesitation.

But this confession landed him in a trap.

"Well, then you'll just wait a couple of days, or if that can't be managed, you'll simply have to come over."

There was nothing to be said against it, and even though it was annoying to him, he consented.

The early August sun scorched the glaring white walls and the overheated streets seemed jaded and empty.

Things would not liven up again until September when on account of the maneuvers their Majesties had announced their coming and great festivities were in preparation.

And since the illustrious Rector of the University, the Crown Prince himself, was expected, the academic representatives had postponed their holidays in order to be on hand for his reception, and the recognized fraternities had recalled all their members in order to make the occasion as brilliant as possible. The non-fraternity students were, naturally, excluded.

Sieburth had hoped to be able to get out of being present, for as an assistant professor he was not called upon to act in a representative capacity. Hildebrand, on the other hand, although not serving officially and not seeking any benefits, wanted for the sheer pleas-

ure of basking in the radiance of the reigning house to interrupt his beloved climbing of the Dolomites and did not in the least dread the long journey that he had to make in order to breathe the same air with their Majesties, if only for a few hours.

He had reserved accommodations for himself and his wife at Cranz where she was to be Marion's guest after his departure, while he planned to spend September making the most of his deferred mountain-climbing tour.

"Why don't I go to Cranz too?" Sieburth often asked himself when the longing to be in Herma's company gave him no rest.

But no! He didn't want to do that. He still felt too independent and loved his freedom too well to want to dance attendance upon her. Besides, the proud bitterness of self-denial was worth something too. In the background of all this was a feeling of discomfort, perhaps even of fear, that came to the fore every once in a while when he thought of Marion Follenius and the growing intimacy in which she was enmeshing Herma. To be near the latter meant being tangled up with the former and he did not feel equal to the dual rôle demanded by the situation.

For that reason he preferred to avoid them both and looked forward to the beneficent hour that would see fit to give him the one for whom he longed, his dear beloved, far from the sight of spying eyes.

He expected to leave for Rauschen the day after the meeting. The boxes of books were packed, the wagon already hired and Mrs. Schimmelpfennig, who until the last moment had hoped to be taken along, went around with big, grieved eyes as if she couldn't quite comprehend her impending loss.

But Helena was angry at him. She avoided him wherever possible, gave impertinent answers and her eyes were constantly filled with tears.

The day before her departure, Herma sent word to him asking him to come to see her.

Here, too, packed trunks stood in the library and the book-shelves were covered with cloths.

When he came in he found her waiting—alone.

"My husband will be here right away," she said as if impelled to make apologies for this circumstance. "We didn't want to leave without having shaken hands with you once again. A pity you are not coming with us. We would surely have spent many a pleasant hour together but we will see each other later at Cranz when the celebrations are over?"

"I'm afraid you will be so occupied with the Follenius family that there will be little left for me."

She was silent and stared into space. Her reflection seemed to verify his assertion.

"Wait a minute, I have it," she said then. "During the hubbub in Königsberg I will, of course, stay at the shore. I am not going to the Follenius villa until later on, and if you too attach no particular

importance to participating in the jubilee . . .” She stammered and blushed. “That is, you mustn’t think,” she hastened to correct herself, “that I disapprove of my husband’s enthusiasm. It seems to suit him somehow. Yes, if he were any different, I should miss it in him. And he feels, too, that he shouldn’t absent himself in deference to the teaching body . . . and as it happens, Mrs. Follenius dare not stay away either . . . for she has to be with the Empress when she visits the Charity Hospital and besides she is also one of the heads of the Women’s Patriotic League.”

“Then for once we will really have a few hours to ourselves,” he said. “From now on I have something to which I can look forward.”

“I, too, am happy in the anticipation of it.” She said it with that simplicity which was free of any quality of coquettishness that always made her seem so defenseless, and put her above all desires.

Then she diverted the conversation to her vacation plans. She described the activities at the mountain hotels and expressed her ever-present anxiety about her husband while he scaled the steep mountain sides. Only when, in the late afternoon, the heavy tread of his mountain shoes resounded through the corridors did she . . .

There he was himself, hasty, hearty, jolly and radiating the joy he anticipated on his trip.

Merry farewell words were exchanged, a last look

given the pair of sunny eyes that were unobscured by melancholy shadows and then everything that for months had constituted his world vanished.

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The evening of the meeting arrived.

Actually, it was not a meeting at all, but simply a getting together of a self-constituted committee whose function it was to decide on future methods of procedure.

In a smoke-filled room of a public house, the windows of which were tightly closed against possible eavesdroppers, was a long table on either side of which were rows of men well on in years or nearing that stage who were gripping ribbed beer glasses and gave evidence of their party affiliations by their unkempt hair and careless linen.

For a man who was well dressed or fastidious clearly indicated that he wanted to be counted among the Government supporters and that he was either a reserve officer, an old fraternity man, or a seeker after some sort of career.

The fewest of them, Follenius and Auerbach among others, felt the necessity, because of their social position, of paying closer attention to externals.

Sieburth as guest was assigned a place next to the presiding officer, a spectacled, white-bearded gentleman who was addressed as "Judge" and who, as Sieburth heard later, had long been out of office, so that

he no longer had to fear any unpleasant consequences arising out of his political affiliation.

There was roll call, other formalities were dealt with and then the president made his opening address.

His head was magnificent. There was something of *Jupiter tonans* about it and his delivery, even though at times it ended in a shriek, was that of an angry god. A pity that one of his front teeth was missing for it aggravated the hissing quality of his consonants.

The gist and underlying theme of his subject was the new revenue tariff enacted at the instigation of Bismarck by the combined forces of Conservatives and Clericals which, according to the speaker, constituted the very nucleus of all reactionary machinations. It was only because the Minister of Education was sacrificed to the hatred of the Centrists that they coöperated in raising the tax on kerosene to six marks, the grain tax to one mark, not to mention the tariff on coffee and tobacco.

Angry voices threw in: "and cotton goods," "and sole leather," "and the importation of hogs."

Sieburth assumed, with justification, that each of those who shouted felt his own interests injured and that through this their political conviction gathered force and momentum.

And the speaker continued. He pointed out that this, however, was only the beginning; that far differ-

ent and more violent measures were threatening the German people because the right Parliamentarism, the only one which could possibly lead to freedom, was lacking, and not having it they would fall victim to any and every maneuver that was perpetrated. He had it on good authority that the tax on brewing was to be doubled and that there was to be a new tax levied on the licensed selling of liquor. And taxes even on stock exchange transactions and on advertisements were in prospect.

Each time a new industry was mentioned a pained exclamation was heard from some one at the table in whom the hope of being spared was being extinguished.

The speaker went on to Bismarck's plan to place the privately owned railroads under Government ownership and explained that to put such an enormous amount of power into one man's hands would virtually make absolutism the prevailing form of government.

General indignation became loud and rose even higher when in conclusion the speaker railed at the apparently existing Conservative-Clerical coalition as the end of all freedom, and at the tariff thus originated as the falling to pieces of German economic life.

"Therefore, back to the trenches!" he screamed into the hall, and an echo so vehement and ready for battle answered him that there seemed only one pos-

sible solution: to go into the streets and erect barricades.

But these brave men were not so eager for trench battle, as was evidenced by the ensuing discussion which dissolved itself invariably into complaints on the one hand and figures on the other.

A cigar dealer concluded that with a tax of 45 marks on domestic and of 85 marks on imported tobacco, which outrage had been voted last month, his business must go hopelessly to pieces; and the proprietor of an iron business told how the price of piping for a water supply system in Greiz had gone up from 113 to 140 pfennigs per running meter, all on account of the tax. "If such prices are asked," he shouted through the hall, "what city will be able to place orders, and in the final analysis doesn't that spell the downfall of German Kultur?"

For all of which he received enthusiastic applause.

The situation became even more dramatic when the owner of a dry-goods establishment discussed the new cotton tariff and criticized it most disparagingly.

"Aside from the fact," he said, "that cotton thread costs 70 marks per 100 kilograms now instead of 36 marks as heretofore, how can I continue to carry Indian calico if—"

"Don't put on airs," a sneering voice called from the other end of the table. "Your Indian calico originates from no further than Plauen!"

But at this the speaker became furious. "Just be-

cause your Indian calicos come from Plauen," he yelled, "is that any reason why mine must too? It's an old story that your English doeskin is made in Kottbus and that—"

It was a pity that the presiding officer interfered and asked the speaker to revert to his subject, otherwise the champions of freedom would have learned more of the trade secrets of these two competitors.

Professor Auerbach, who had been looking over at Sieburth for some time with lips that quivered with embarrassment, asked for the floor and tried with a quiet and clever speech to lift the verbal conflict to a higher level.

"Even what we heard just now is instructive for us," he said, "for through it we realize that the new economic order of things created by Bismarck, inasmuch as it teaches the citizen ruthlessness in looking after his private interests, must result in the death of all political morality. But we are facing established facts and would do better to turn our attention to future dangers. The appointment of Court Preacher Stöcker, of whose activities we have heard more than enough [catcalls of 'Fie! For shame!'], to the office of General Superintendent of East and West Prussia, seems, thank God, to have been averted, but that the new Conservative-Clerical coalition will, as far as cultural interests are concerned, do us little good, every one of us more than suspects."

And then he spoke on the prospective limitations

of marriages, of the resuscitation of the guild system by means of journeymen and masters examinations, and of other impending infringements on personal liberty, taking pains to stress little things to make them seem important without, however, incurring the risk of ridicule.

But this discretion did not impress his audience. They looked at their finger-nails, or at the ceiling and even began to indulge in separate conversations in an undertone until he finally sat down to no applause.

But in this respect his successor was made of different stuff. There he stood, broad-chested, chubby-cheeked, with an ample knob forming the bridge of his nose and swollen slitty eyes out of which a sly gleam darted now and then, and was received with laughing approbation by those who knew him.

"Rector Handtke," the presiding officer had announced.

"Do you know, gentlemen," he began in the broadest kind of accent characteristic of East Prussia, which was his home, "who was the ox of Sicily?"

"No," they called back merrily.

"Well then, I'll tell you. Incidentally, he was a holy man—St. Thomas Aquinas who is now the patron saint of the whole clergy. His fellow students gave him this nickname while he was studying with Albertus Magnus. Albertus Magnus once said, 'Let him alone. Some day the whole world

will take cognizance of the roaring of this ox!’ And wasn’t he right? On the fourth of August the Pope issued an encyclical letter in which he commends him as the foremost teacher the Church has ever had. We have heard him through these past six hundred and fifty years, which really gives one the right to say, ‘Well roared, ox!’ Isn’t that so? [Laughter and bravos.] But now, gentlemen, comes the serious part. What did this holy Thomas Aquinas actually teach? He taught that the Roman Pontiff must stand above all kings of Christianity and must be the King of kings and ruler of rulers and all worldly kings must be his vassals. That is what he taught, and if the Pope holds that to be true to-day and Bismarck associates with such a man—and we know that he does, for he is to meet the papal nuncio in Kissingen soon—then surely it is clear to us where the path leads. Do I have to tell you, gentlemen, in which direction it leads? It leads to Canossa; that’s where it leads!”

He fairly shouted the last few words into the hall and jubilant applause answered him. That was the tone which these simple men had longed for. It lifted them above the drab monotony of the daily grind, above the narrow confines of their middle-class existence, to an intoxicating dissatisfaction which cost them nothing and placed them in the category of saviors of the Fatherland. The blood of ’48, which had been offered up by others before them,

still flowed in their veins and inspired them to the heroic deeds of their predecessors who proudly considered that prison and even death was not too great a sacrifice to make in order to gain freedom for their people.

And in conclusion he said, "And so, gentlemen, we see our Lutheran creed, the strength and independence of the German Empire, going to ruin through the very man who created it." More than likely not one of them believed it but there were very few, to judge by their rollicking enthusiasm, who were not willing to be convinced of the fact.

Sieburth was peering down the length of the table in order to impress the picture of this wholesale tomfoolery indelibly on his mind when he caught sight of Follenius, a beer stein in his raised hand, greeting the speaker with a loud "Bravo!"

Even this circumspect and worldly man whose cool calculation was responsible for increasing his fortune and whose sharp eyes overlooked nothing but the turmoil in his wife's soul, had been won over by the cheap rhetoric of this barroom politician.

But Auerbach looked straight ahead, disgruntled, and several others whom Sieburth did not know and one of whom, as he later learned, was a man who had been a martyr to the Reaction, followed suit.

No doubt he was recollecting the bitter reality of other days and recognized this as being an idle pastime.

What now followed was a confusion of complaints, demands, warnings, and flights to an imaginary democracy high up in the clouds, and over and over again one heard the word which conveyed all the inmost longings of which these pious lamblike souls were capable—Parliamentarism.

Yes, if once this much-vaunted Parliamentarism, the true and genuine Parliamentarism which was the vogue in England and France with its accompanying lack of confidence and its varying party ministries and its other distinct advantages, were in effect, all one's troubles would be at end and Heaven would bloom on earth.

At the end the presiding officer sprang a surprise on Sieburth.

"We have a highly honored guest in our midst," he said, turning to him, "whom we hope soon to be able to regard as a member. Wouldn't he consider breaking his silence? It would be of the greatest value to us to hear the ideas and conclusions of one who is still an outsider."

After such an introduction Sieburth felt forced to comply whether he wanted to or not.

He assumed the modest and noncommittal expression that always served him well and began, "You are mistaken, gentlemen, if you think that I have anything significant to say to you. Furthermore, the superexcellence of the advice to which I have listened would preclude my adding anything

whatever to it—it would be superfluous. And even where I do not agree with your views, I will make a strenuous effort to become converted to them.”

“Bravo! Bravo!” resounded along the table.

“I must admit,” he continued, “that when I came here I nursed the suspicion that the feathers of the democratic citizenry were being somewhat ruffled by a storm wind calling itself Bismarck, but I realize by the vehemence with which you are working along these new lines, how thoroughly mistaken I was. A post-coach reform is important even in the times of express trains, for the champions of this form of locomotion will not die out as long as love of nature persists. I admit, too, that the new economic order may very possibly serve as an outstanding motive for the revival of political ideals. The little fishes on which the pikes grow big and fat are not there after all solely for the purpose of being gobbled up, although it would not help them much should they suddenly grow spines on their skins, for unfortunately, the pikes would eat them, spines and all . . . Still when you come right down to it, there are all sorts of possibilities on which the most hardened and carnivorous fish may spoil its stomach, and to work to that end is certainly worth the sweat of the élite. A very enterprising fish of prey may possibly develop out of one of the poor victims preyed upon.”

“I don’t understand a word of it,” he heard some

one near by whisper. Another voice said, "No doubt, very clever! Very clever!"

"As for the danger of intellectual retrogression," he continued, "I can't say that I am as pessimistic as you, gentlemen, for while one can steal the sausage from my larder one cannot so easily filch the smoke from my roof . . . If, as an intellectual, I could be superstitious, I would even say, 'The Pope who eats of us must die of us.' You would answer, 'A Holy Father does not die so easily.' But one thing we do observe, namely, that science outlives any and all holiness . . . Even so, in this instance too, the first duty of the citizen is to protest, and dissatisfaction was certainly generally displayed here to-day. In any event, I thank you, gentlemen, for having allowed me to share your misgivings. I haven't my battle sword with me to-day or else I should be glad to rattle it. But let us be glad that we do not need to clank with our chains! And that, gentlemen, is my wish for you and me."

With that he sat down and enjoyed the applause which the last sentence had called forth, but he caught a look of indignation and disappointment in the eyes of the man who had brought him there.

"I have certainly lost his good will," thought Sieburth, and was vexed with himself for not having been able to restrain his sarcasm.

But when the session was over and the men rose from their seats, Auerbach came over to him and

said, "You must not think that I fail to see the ludicrous side exhibited at a gathering of this kind as clearly as you, but I adhere to it in spite of that for there is no possibility of accomplishing results any other way, and I hope you will arrive at the same conclusion."

"I must beg you to remember that I did not speak of my own accord," answered Sieburth.

"I know, I know," said Auerbach, "and for that reason I have no right to be angry at you."

With that he shook his hand and went quietly on his way.

In the checkroom Sieburth ran into Follenius.

"I haven't seen you in such a long time," he said; "if it is agreeable to you let us walk part of the way together."

So together they went into the twilight of the street with its midsummer humidity and Follenius continued, "I was not able to follow you altogether, but anyhow everybody knows that you're something of a rogue."

"What great crime have I committed?" asked Sieburth.

"As to that, one can't exactly say, one simply feels it. It would have been very much better if you had expressed your opinion openly."

"As a guest I hadn't the right to do that."

"Right again, but you shouldn't have come at all, for now you are caught like the rest of us. No one

wants to be known as a turncoat and it is a name the world is only too ready to apply."

"I was more than surprised," said Sieburth, "to hear you shout so vociferous a bravo at that ranting schoolmaster."

"What can you do?" Follenius answered, and turned his calm, intelligent face with its smile of self-abnegating irony toward him. "We sober people relish exaggeration and when we hear a word like *Canossa*, off we go. We poor fools all live on such cheap propaganda. And our opponents do exactly the same thing. One indulges in mud-slinging and calls it conviction."

"I am only curious," laughed Sieburth, "to see when you, too, will be lined up on the other side."

Frightened, the former looked up at him, then laughed too.

"Perhaps some day we'll meet in the enemy's camp," he said jestingly.

"In my case that is improbable," answered Sieburth.

"In mine, too," Follenius said. "I would, in that event, have to get a scythe to mow down the grass that would grow in front of my door. And since we happen to be on the subject of my door, why do you never come to see us? I believe my wife feels very much hurt. Whenever I speak of you she makes a wry face. Have we offended you, by any chance?"

Sieburth vehemently protested that this could only have been an unfortunate oversight occasioned by overwork, which he would be only too glad to remedy if given the opportunity.

"Come with us to Cranz," said Follenius. "Our house commands a view of the sea and we have plenty of room. You could easily live with us."

Sieburth was conscious of a stitch through his heart and said quickly that it was a crying shame that he was tied up at Rauschen, but perhaps he would be permitted to come over to see them sometime!

And with this understanding, they separated.

The gray August moon floated through dull clouds, but wherever the light broke through, he could see Herma's face looking down at him.

"What would happen," he thought, "if one day I were to live in the same house with her, in adjoining rooms?"

And he walked the streets for hours dreaming of nothing else.

CHAPTER XIII

LIGHT AND LAUGHTER

Go into the light, my friend!

Go where the sun dances with you, where crystal sparks shimmer in the sand and the blades of grass as if converted into jets of flame lose themselves in the ether. Go into the light, steep yourself in light, saturate yourself with light, breathe light and exhale it in the form of laughter!

For here is shadow, though even the shadow laughs here, and though obscuring, it allows of enough sun for your house to be flooded in it—the left gable mornings, the long wall afternoons, and the right gable evenings. Your desk is dappled with its antics half the forenoon and your bedstead is already painted and lacquered with it at five in the morning, but the branching pines surround you and make a shadow prison of your world of sun.

So throw your pen on your desk, stack up the pages on which the ink is already dry and go out on the dunes . . . You can take the thoughts of your work with you; in fact you must, for they enslave you now more than ever. You drag them with you as pain and as joy, as fetters and as finery. They do not

relinquish you even in your dreams, and cannot if they want to, for they are you, yourself, destiny's gift to you, and at once your right to an existence!

These were the lines along which Sieburth talked to himself at noontime of the day he had completed the first week of his holiday.

He stretched himself out of a well-earned feeling of brain fag and arose.

When divested of his work, he seemed to himself to be leading an enchanted life.

He needed only to look around him and his surroundings and daily life took on the aspect of miracles and he could not realize it was possible.

He, the city child, the product of brick-and-mortar ugliness and leather-bound wisdom, realized with amazement that what he had always regarded as a literary curiosity, subject matter for bucolic verses and affectedly simple village tales, were actual things. Forest, sea, field and heath were as real and actual as were streets and squares and cultivated gardens; a peasant's home was not of necessity a stage setting, and the farm-hand who stepped out of it was not just a walking costume plate; and what was more, the solitude that he loved and which was as essential to him as his daily bread did not need to be attained by an artificial closing of the door of his soul but came about naturally through this mode of life.

He had never before been so contentedly secluded

in all of his life. He had never suspected that one could be quite so secluded.

The small one-story frame house he had rented was a good fifteen minutes from the village, the houses and farms of which lay in the basin of the valley at the foot of the dune where they surrounded closely a pond shaded by venerable linden trees.

He had arranged with Mr. Bosien, the proprietor of the only tavern in the vicinity, to have his meals sent in by a servant and warmed on his stove. The same servant prepared his breakfast in the morning and cleared up his room. He was alone all the rest of the time.

A genuine hermit if there ever was one! He knew nothing about the other guests who put up at Mr. Bosien's or roomed in the peasant homes; in fact he did not even know who summered in the so-called "villas" which were wooden shacks like his own.

He avoided conversations with the letter-carrier and the servant girl, and other people made no effort to speak to him.

He only heard their muffled and intermingled voices now and then as they approached his cottage and went by at a distance of a hundred yards where the footpath led through the woods.

And when the crowning glory, the climax of the day came, when he stood on the very summit of the dune from which the declivity ran in a steep descent

to the sea, cleft and jagged, almost like rocky cliffs, then he occasionally heard shouts and screams coming from the shacks which, separated at a decent distance, marked the respective bathing places for men and women. He felt no desire, however, to join these Lilliputian bathers who down below, battling joyously with the breakers, were expending energy to gain new vigor.

When he felt like bathing he wandered along the heights a little distance towards Neukuhren, where the Sassau woods with leaning tree trunks, exposed roots, and horizontal tops dropped precipitously to the beach—a fantastic, doomed wilderness where you seldom met a human being.

There, he climbed down toward the valley, threw off his clothes screened by the half-dead shrubbery and sprang into the sea, and then returned home by the same route.

This usually happened towards evening when the sun in sinking was enveloping everything with its fiery glow. He would not have dared to go down at noon for then the dunes and the shore were full of people.

“But after all I have committed no crime,” he said to himself to-day, “and if I should meet any of my acquaintances, I shall try to bear the misfortune with dignity.”

First he went to look after his crow.

He had found her cowering along the roadside

with one of her wings shot, and had taken her along with him.

From that first day on he had looked upon her as his companion. She had never been really wild, a baby crow that had not yet learned fear of man and from the very beginning she had greedily snatched the food out of his hands.

Inexperienced in the care of animals he had arranged a nest for her in a basket, but her claws sought a foothold, so, with her one sound wing, she blustered around the room until she found a piece of rounded wood, a bar or a molding on which she could sit. But eventually her noise and disorder became too much for him, so he found a cage for her outdoors which had formerly been used to house chickens and from which she greeted him with gurgles and screams as she flew to him in a great rush whenever he approached, for her food cup was always empty.

And after he had fed her amply to-day, he went off into the woods which in the midday humidity wafted the scent of resin, moss and decaying wood toward him.

Only five minutes more and he would reach the crest of the dunes and with it salty breezes, light and coolness.

The trees grew farther apart, the glimmer of the air became more pronounced and the glistening blue sea mounted toward the hazy gleam of the sky.

Truly here was light in such profusion that with only a fraction of it a thousand nights could be converted into the brightest daytime! The very earth seemed a sheet of fire and, where there was a carpet of plant life, the reflection radiated so much brilliance that it seemed even to increase the superabundance of light.

Sieburth threw himself full length into the sand among the bushes of sea holly which shaded him from the blinding glare with their bluish thorny leaves.

Below white-capped breakers rolled in on the beach. They were in no hurry—nothing and nobody hurried here with the possible exception of the sea gulls whose flight, when they scented prey, became almost zigzag in its archlike course.

Nor were the bathers in a hurry; the puppet game they carried on between the first and second rows of white breakers seemed never to end even though the position of the sun indicated that it was noon and the midday meal that awaited them was some distance away—first a walk along the shore, then up the steep steps which could really not be called steps for they were only rough boards held in place by pegs, then further on—

But who was clambering up the slope, not up the steps but on the sandy bank on the side, which, because of its incessant dripping away and filtering

through, prevented the faltering feet from gaining a foothold?

Two women, no, two girlish figures were silhouetted against the light background and were only distinguishable at the slender line of demarcation where the darker sea did not obscure the light.

They laughed and argued and the wind carried the sound of their merriment. But the sand yielded no stability and they sank back into it time and time again until they finally gave up the unequal and profitless struggle and took to the steps.

So they disappeared from sight for the time being, for the slope was almost vertical toward the top and their heads and shoulders only came into view again when they reached the summit.

Then he recognized them and was startled.

Should he get up or crawl quickly out of sight, back into the woods?

No, not that. No doubt they would recognize him too and the joke of this hour, which was on him, would be kept alive far into the following winter.

So he lay there perfectly still waiting to see in which direction they would go.

But he had no luck; they came directly towards him as the destiny of his future days.

Making the best of a bad bargain, he got up to greet them and there was no end to the joy over their meeting.

"We knew, of course, that you were here," said Milly, "and Papa had every intention of looking you up—"

"But Mamma and both of us advised so strongly against it," Cilly continued, "that he did nothing about it."

"And why did you so strongly advise against it?"

"Because obviously you wanted to avoid us along with every one else," answered Milly.

"If I had had the remotest idea that you were here—" he remonstrated.

"We will make an exception and believe you," bantered Cilly, "because it was an eleventh-hour opportunity that is responsible for our being here. Councilman Weber either must or wants to stay in Königsberg on account of the preparations for the Kaiser's visit and for that reason put his little house at our disposal. Isn't that fine?"

While they were on the subject he told them how he had obtained his cottage, spoke of his work and of his companionship with his crow, and both sisters were most anxious to make the acquaintance of the comrade with whom he spent his days.

So he escorted them through the woods to his home, invited them to sit on the bench that stood beneath the windows and bent over to take the crow out of its cage. As he rose with the fluttering bird between his fingers, he noticed that Milly was watching him with intense curiosity; Cilly, however,

was sitting sideways with her head half turned in the direction of the inside of the house and as she glanced at his writing desk, he intercepted a look of such tenderness on her face that he felt a sudden pang of self-reproach.

But then she jumped up quickly as if she did not want to be caught off guard and showed all the more interest in the snapping bird which, on account of continued bad behavior, was replaced in its cage.

Sieburth invited the ladies to come into his study for a moment but they declined on the plea of having to get back home immediately because Milly had sprained her foot a little during their careless adventure and the pain was beginning to make itself felt.

So he accompanied them down into the valley to the frame house which was only a few steps from the village and which, standing in the middle of a vegetable garden, offered the jaded city people a modest refuge.

The Privy Councilor, a gnōme with a massive apostle-like head, greeted him cordially and his wife with the pale blond hair and tall spare figure, who seemed directly transplanted from her native manorial estate, invited him to sit down, without much ado, to the midday meal which awaited them.

But he declined, and asked permission to call for the young ladies sometime during the following day to take them for a walk.

When he was alone again, he was angry with himself for having extended the invitation and at the prospect of the wasted hours.

"If I could at least have Cilly to myself," he thought, "I would be able to carry on a serious conversation."

And then he recalled the caressing look which she had bestowed upon his desk, and this made him feel a trifle sad and apprehensive.

"If it were not for Herma," he thought further, "I would fall a victim to her and to matrimony."

For even the slyest and toughest rarely emerge from such a holiday idyl unengaged.

But Herma's image was the talisman that saved him from the danger of being caught. He counted the days until he should be able to see her again. Only two weeks separated him from her return and the Kaiser's visit which promised to bring about that long anticipated being together.

He dreamed about it every minute that he did not spend in working but he still lacked the courage to imagine all that might happen on such an occasion. Only to be at her side, to be allowed to speak with her—without witnesses and not always to have to fear an abrupt end to their conversation, that was happiness enough.

The next afternoon he called at the Wendlands' and sure enough his wish had been gratified. Milly's ankle was swollen and required absolute rest, so it

came about quite naturally that he and Cilly went alone.

Where were they to go? There were many roads but he did not know them. He had never gone anywhere except to the landslide near Sassau. She had never been there, so she asked him to take her there.

So they walked along, side by side, as during previous summers and it seemed like a reunion, like home.

There was no suspicion of sourness, no suggestion of hidden reproach in her manner such as girls sometimes show when they have been courted and then neglected. Jolly and whole-hearted, full of friendly raillery, she took up the threads where they had been dropped and without much hesitation asked him about his work.

"For that seems to be the best tie that binds us together," she added laughingly in an attempt to justify her curiosity.

And he thoroughly agreed with her.

"Your excursion into Natural Science was a grand success, wasn't it?" she continued.

He asked for an explanation.

"Don't you remember what you complained to me about in the spring at Follenius', that you would always be a stranger in the field of Natural Science? And then your lecture of the summer term came along and showed your fears to be absolutely groundless."

"What do you know about my lecture?" he asked in astonishment.

"Well, I inquired. The Natural Scientists are quite taken off their feet by the intimate knowledge you are supposed to have displayed in subjects they consider their exclusive province."

"And who watches all this so closely?" he asked, more and more astonished.

"Every one watches every one else," she answered laughingly. "It is like that at these small universities and there are always plenty of auditors who love to be questioned."

"Did you question one of them too?"

She turned away to hide her blushes.

"I happen to have sources of information," she laughed, "and the Professor won't be able to alter that. I would, of course, much prefer a more direct method, but we don't walk together in the woods of the dunes very often."

"But now we could make up for it, if you like."

And this was more than mere politeness. Everything she said, smiled or looked pleased him. She was like the summer breeze that caressed him gently as it passed over him.

Gradually the branches became less dense and sea and dunes stretched out before them. The sun was already sinking toward the horizon, the waves had gone to rest, and on the purple bridge of declining rays which spanned the blue surface and threw its

reflection on the roseate strand, naked children played about.

"Isn't it like a fairy tale?" she asked, pointing into the sea.

"By no means like a fairy tale," he answered. "The water is wet, the brats are screaming, and we are talking philosophy."

"We don't have to, you know," she laughed, swallowing a feeling of pique.

"But yes, yes," he countered, "it is the best tie that holds us together."

The shy, startled look that she gave him could not be misinterpreted and he felt ashamed to have hurt her. So correcting himself, he quickly said, "Perhaps we are bound together by other bonds that are equally fine."

At which she was calmed and mollified.

They walked silently along the crest of the dunes. When they came to a slope they ran down and then up the opposite side as far as the impetus would carry them until they reached the landslide which was their destination.

Jumbled together and supporting each other the trunks and branches hung suspended over the abyss, keeping alive by the sheer desire to go on living.

"Do you want to go down?" he said.

Immediately she clambered on ahead of him—over protruding roots and sinking stumps, through

the bushes, along the drying twigs and branches, from tree to tree, from sandbank to sandbank.

And when they reached a forking branch that reached high into the air and from which further progress seemed impossible, she stopped, breathing deeply, and called back to him, "This is a good place to stay. Let's rest here!"

"Above the abyss?" he asked, anxious on her account.

But she only laughed, "Don't we always hang over an abyss? It's only that we don't know it."

Something in these words cut him like a knife, and he said, weighing his words, "You may be right but it is just this ignorance, this somnambulism which holds and sustains us."

She had found a resting place in the space between two boughs and, propping her feet against a third which lay below, she was ensconced in a cubby in which she seemed as comfortable as could be.

He sat close behind her astride a branch which lay horizontally and as he had a big knot in support directly behind him he was able to risk lying down flat and gazing at the sky. By lifting his head slightly, he could see her rosy rounded neck and ash-blond hair.

But they were still many yards from the bottom.

"It is not fair of me," he said, "to take you along such a hazardous route."

"I beg your pardon," she laughed. "I was the

guide and I am proud of it, for now we are really hanging over a precipice."

"How did this idea occur to you," he asked, "you, a girl of good family, esteemed and protected—who are worlds removed from any tumult of thought—"

"Are you so sure of that?"

"Well, all right. Thoughts are one's own, but surely all the more from the tumult of real life, for what is called guilt and sin by the middle classes—"

"Only by the middle classes?"

He was silent. What he was thinking was far removed from the province of maidenly meditation. She would have construed it as seduction.

"I do not ask because of narrow-mindedness," she continued, "but I think that the duty which binds one, binds all."

"If there is such a thing as duty at all," he said.

Frightened, she tried to turn around to look at him.

"And you want to become the successor of Kant?" she cried. "You want to write the 'Three Stages of Ethics'?"

Now it was his turn to be startled. "What do you know about my 'Three Stages of Ethics'?" he asked.

"Why, you told me about it last summer and said that its completion would fill your next two years. I have often enough racked my brain, wondering what those three stages could be, for I don't know anything but the title."

"If I were to tell you about them, taking your promise to keep my confidence for granted, would it please you?"

He saw how the joy affected her.

"But now—here," she cried, "here, suspended between heaven and earth, as though lost in the universe. An hour like this will never come to us again."

"Very well then," he began, "but you must not expect any magical formulas. What we philosophers dig up is always gray and dull, but sometimes we strike a spring and then a well of thought bubbles forth."

He paused for breath, and she listened, tense. "What has annoyed me for a long time," he continued, "is that most of the moral philosophers demand the same thing of all people no matter how radically they may differ from one another. For that reason their systems never come down to the earth. That is how I happened to think out this succession of stages which, in a related sense, is not new either—and hasn't been from Aristotle up to Schopenhauer and—but I don't want to digress. What is new with me is only the division, with which I shall probably meet bitter opposition."

And then he explained how each system of ethics, as many thinkers have done for thousands of years, must begin with self-interest or egoism.

"If you, my worthy fellow man, do not want to

rise above your primitive instincts, if you want nothing of your existence but pleasure and wealth and your own well-being, good! you're entitled to it and no power can touch you . . . be uncharitable as much as you like, give any one a push who stands in your way—value your neighbor only in so far as he can bring you advantage or amusement—that is all very well, all within your rights. And divine Mother Nature teaches you the same thing daily. The penal laws which in a highly reassuring manner supplement the mental libertinism of these exponents of ethics will see to it that you do not altogether overstep the bounds.”

“But what you are describing is all reprehensible, unethical and evil.”

“You are mistaken,” he answered. “I find fault with nothing, not even with the proletarian whom I am setting forth for you here. And good and bad exist for me, as they do for Spinoza and many others, only in so far as they are useful or vice versa.”

“Useful—for whom?” she said.

“You see, that is what matters. And now we come to the second stage. This is where the picture changes, here education has borne richer fruits, here reign consideration, fellow-feeling, self-sacrifice, fervor for truth, love of suffering for universal good, all the accomplishments of thousands of years of intellectual and spiritual culture. Here the approved teachers and leaders are developed. Here the bul-

lion of human ideas is minted into currency; here the metamorphosis which guarantees each generation its period of blossoming imperceptibly takes place."

"And above and beyond all this there is still something loftier?" asked Cilly, who had been following him approvingly. "Aren't the best of mankind included in this classification?"

"The 'best' translated back into the Greek as 'Aristoi'—fine! But at times there existed something very different, something superior to the 'Aristoi' of the Greek State—these were the tyrants. And now we come to the tyrants of the human race. They are the men of the third and highest stage. They show humanity the way. They force their ideas upon them so that it becomes disgraceful and ridiculous to think along any other lines than those prescribed by them. They disregard every written and transmitted law and make their own laws, if they don't happen to be acting on the impulse of the moment. The conquerors, the builders of nations, the geniuses in the realms of thought and art belong to this category, and I might even include the great rogues if they were not in other respects weak-minded fools or wretched scoundrels."

"There are only a few of those," said Cilly, again attempting to turn towards him, "not many more in each generation than you can count on your ten fingers. Does it pay to form a special class for them?"

He looked at her in astonishment.

"You are right," he said, "and lure my thoughts out of the deepest recesses of my mind. To the few of whom I spoke we must add the many who, although they are not exactly geniuses as the others, feel themselves strong enough to create their own standards for their actions. . . . First of all only in theory, for they are the products of their social environment and have imbibed the conditions governing it with their mother's milk. And then in practice too, when the net of moral requirements which our upbringing flings over our heads seems unendurable. They are called 'Personalities' and always give offense unless they are held in check."

Cilly had raised herself abruptly out of her position at his last words and turned herself so that she could look him full in the face. Her eyes seemed to say, "Now I know why you are steering your course as you do; now I know the beginning and end of your journey."

But he was too deeply engrossed in his own thoughts to notice this.

"I'll wager you have another question in reserve," he said. "You are afraid that the people of the highest stage could easily be confused with those of the lowest. But no! The latter act by instinct, the former because of conviction. The latter stand beneath, the former above the current morality. They are alike only in one particular: The danger of social

ostracism threatens them both and they are always on the edge of the abyss—just as we are at this moment, and for that reason I think it is about time that we start for home.”

So, getting on his feet, he stretched his hand towards her to help her get over the round slippery trunk more easily.

Then they climbed back on the path by which they had come and went towards the crest of the dunes.

“I feel as if I were emerging from a strange land,” said Cilly, looking down into the dark depths, “strange to body and soul. I will often think back on it, and I am a little afraid, both for you and for me.”

“Why that?”

“For me because I shall perhaps be thrown off my beaten track; for you because—because in your self-appraisal, I take it you will not be satisfied with either of the two lower stages.”

“You are certainly right,” he said.

“Then the danger of which you just spoke would threaten you too.”

“Don’t worry,” he said, laughing. “I’m a wide-awake fellow and not so easily caught. At any rate, my time is sure to come, and then they will follow my lead or leave me alone. It’s all the same to me.”

She looked at him with shining eyes. “That’s what I expected of you,” the look said.

"But wouldn't it be better," he said, "if in the treatment of general questions, we left ourselves out of consideration entirely?"

"You must have patience with me," she said, half laughing, "with us women general questions have always turned into personal issues. I think I would rather pick a bunch of flowers for you."

And she bent down to pick what grew in the sandy soil about her—sea pinks, sea lavenders, and creeping milkwort.

But the colors would not blend and again and again she threw away what she had found.

He, on his part, in the meantime admired the gently sloping line of her back and the ample curves of her hips that manifested themselves as she bent down.

"What a magnificent woman," he thought, "what a priceless possession she would be if it were not for that other one!"

And the thought welled up within him, "Take her for yourself, then you will have what you need and will be free from all temptation."

But he put it from him again immediately. Not for nothing did he want to have thought of Herma night after night, and to have hoped and planned and to have been the victim of his riotous imagination. And besides—she was waiting for him. Not in vain had she created a retreat for herself and for him in

which no third could enter, in which both of them were as isolated as on a desert island which is the ideal of all those who love.

"Of what are you thinking?" Cilly's voice aroused him. "No doubt you're climbing about again on your three stages?"

"I'm looking for a fourth," he answered, "on which everything I have built up will count for nothing."

"And you are not finding it?"

"I'm afraid there is no place for it in my thought."

"I think I know of one."

"And that is?"

"To be without thought and live for the moment."

The dear, dear creature! What self-denial for his sake!

Then she threw herself on the sand and tried to arrange the straggling flowers into a bouquet, but she had nothing with which to hold the individual stems together.

"Promise me not to get vain?" she asked.

He promised.

"Then I will do it this way!" And with a quick gesture she pulled a few strands from the light bushy hair and wound them around the pliable stems.

Again hot waves surged within him. This was no furtive coquetry, no suggestion of self-surrender, only the simple outpouring of a soul that was his, that was full to overflowing.

"This is the moment," everything in him cried out. "This is the turning point of your life!"

But another voice said in contradiction, "She'll remain yours. She won't be lost to you."

And what she had done was so unintentional that she did not even raise her eyes to note its effect on him. Singing softly to herself, she finished the bouquet, arranged the flowers, broke off the stems that were too long, and as she held the product of her skill toward him, the most she wanted was to be praised.

On the way home too she avoided getting back to theoretical questions. They spoke of the Kaiser's visit, of friends, and about animals and as he neared his house and took the flowers from her in order to quickly put them on his desk while she waited, she called out to him merrily, "Give my regards to your crow."

He stayed at the Wendlands' house for supper. Milly had gotten up and sat at the table with the others. But when after a time they adjourned to the garden in the late twilight, she retired again.

Her bushy, silvery hair threw out sparks just as Cilly's did, and in the roguish expression with which she looked at her sister and which the latter also had, there lay a secret gleam that said, "You lucky one!"

CHAPTER XIV

AMONG THE DUNES

THE crow became more and more unruly. She disdained the proffered bits of meat and when Sieburth wanted to take her out of the cage she bit him in the finger.

One night he discovered the solution to the riddle. Awakening he heard a spitting and a beating of wings in front of the window, and as he stepped out of the front door to find out the reason he saw two hideous cats clinging to the bars of the cage and threatening to draw the frightened creature to them with their claws.

He chased them away with a few pieces of firewood he had gotten from the kitchen, but who could be sure that they would not return the next night?

Since it was next to impossible to keep her in the house, he decided to give the captive her liberty no matter what became of her.

He took her in his hands to carry her into the woods near by. But hardly had he left the immediate vicinity of his house when a couple of crows flew screaming toward him from a lone poplar growing on the edge of a sand bank, and scarcely a minute

later he found himself surrounded by a dark swarm of crows from which first one, then another descended angrily upon him with the evident intention of making for his eyes.

But they did not dare to come quite that close to him and as soon as he lifted his disengaged arm toward them, they flew back again.

Only when he reached the narrowing underbrush did they disperse and circle around the high tree tops.

He placed the young animal on a dry pine branch in the hope that they would take their disabled relative into their care, and went back to his writing, satisfied.

But when after an hour he happened to listen, it seemed to him as if he heard the staccato cries he knew so well coming to him softly from the woods.

So without waiting any longer he left his work to look after the abandoned crow.

Sure enough! There she sat in the same spot where he had put her and there wasn't a crow anywhere in sight.

So he took her once more in his hand and carried the bird which now clung willingly to his finger back to her home, glad that he had not exposed her to starvation.

The next night he put his revolver in a handy place and when, half asleep, he again heard the spitting, he jumped up and shot through the open

window aiming for the preying thieves who disappeared even more rapidly than they had on the previous night.

The following night he had peace and hoped to be rid of them forever.

But the time of the Kaiser's visit was drawing near and with it the long anticipated outing which was to last at least two or three days.

The thought of what would become of his charge distressed him; but when he mentioned it to the two sisters, they relieved him of the worry by offering without hesitancy to take over the responsibility and to look after her two or three times a day.

These days they only went about in threes and the conversation was never about any but current and casual topics. It almost seemed to him as if Cilly avoided being alone with him, and if her sister left them for a minute she looked around for her anxiously.

Finally the day arrived that took him away.

The Privy Councilor, who was dean at this time and had to officiate in that capacity at the festivities, made the proposition that they go to town together and so on a damp, warm September morning attended by laughter and waving handkerchiefs they drove off together into the misty grayness.

As Sieburth had made no secret of his distaste for the pomp of the court, he gave as the reason for his presence there his desire to observe the general

tone of the occasion and to gather information as to how deeply the monarchical feeling was implanted in the life of the populace. Nor did he hide the fact that he was planning to stay in Cranz.

Cilly had looked at him wide-eyed and questioningly as if she suspected that all sorts of mysterious things were driving him out of his peaceful existence.

During the journey the Privy Councilor spoke vivaciously and confidentially about his work, his income and his home; he even touched upon his happy domestic life—but there was not a shadow of a reference such as might be expected of a worried father in the presence of a suitor whose declaration was tardy. Nor did he inquire into Sieburth's plans. To be sure there was no reason to probe in this instance for his future seemed so self-evident.

By the time the two men reached Königsberg, near noon, they were better friends than ever.

In the vicinity of the city gate they were already met by crowds dressed in gay colors. Farmers on foot and in decorated wagons had made pilgrimages to the city in order, if luck was with them, to get one look at the royal personages. Their wagons jammed the streets that led into town, for closer to the center of things traffic for vehicles was prohibited.

So the two professors alighted and went their several ways.

"We know that you are in the neighborhood,"

said Wendland in shaking his hand, "and should your presence at any of the celebrations be requested, I will send you a telegram."

Sieburth gratefully assented.

Left alone he allowed himself to be pushed along by the throng that moved toward the castle. An irresistible stream against which it seemed impossible to fight and which grew more turbulent the closer one came to the goal, surged and eddied along its course. Suddenly he could go no farther. A double chain of policemen and war veterans barred the way.

Shrieks of indignation went up. Some tried to move on through force but failed to overcome those who were there to preserve law and order.

So the mob finally calmed down and tried to see the humorous side of things. Practical jokers who tickled and pinched the girls and women wherever a cushion of fat proved too much of a temptation, indulged in their amusing sport and reaped laughter or a good scolding. An expert in the art of spitting, who could designate the exact point it would be possible for him to reach, sent out his cascades over the ducking heads at any spot which seemed open to him, and was applauded in his efforts with an acclaim a prima donna would envy.

A virtual forest of flags waved all around from windows and roofs—flags of all sizes, some glistening and new, others dirty and faded, flags with holes

burnt in them and stained with tallow from the last illumination, flags streaked from rain, flags of black and white, and of black, white and red; even a seditious black, red and gold one boldly interposed itself among the rest.

Every house owner had decorated the front of his house as well as he could. Where the plaster had fallen off, he had tried to hide the blemish with a carpet or a garland, and a roofless makeshift of a building was so densely covered with wreaths that only here and there a red tile looked out from the green-shaded peep-hole like a culprit who has been discovered.

In the meantime the tumult in the surging throng grew in volume. The screaming mouths in the faces that were covered with sweat and fumes as though smeared with oil looked like great black holes. A blonde with a sallow complexion had draped a garish black, white and red flag around her shoulders and at regular intervals shrieked forth a spasmodic hurrah. A wheezing hurdy-gurdy emitted the noises usual to an ailing invalid, and clappers and mouth organs purred and rattled in the midst of it all.

But then a moment of solemn silence hushed even this raging mob.

"Make room there!" thundered the voices of approaching policemen.

And behind them, supported by other policemen, hobbled four white-haired old men with ruffed high

hats on their heads and loaded down with rattling medals. All of them were far over eighty, and it was almost a miracle that four such men were still alive.

"Veterans of 1813," the crowd reverently murmured. Many hats were removed and every disrespectful joke was checked in its inception.

Sieburth too, who had been almost choked with disgust at the former proceedings, experienced a thrill. Here history and heroism stalked in ghostly embodiment through a new great era that vitiated the former greatness.

Or had that former time on close inspection been equally coarse and vulgar? Are plebeians destined to remain plebeians even when the urge for universal self-sacrifice seems to make them rise above themselves?

Then monarchy, coördinating, creative of useful instincts, would have a purpose and even this wretched uproar, in which all the base instincts were unleashed, existed in the interest of the State which cannot be realized in a higher and purer form.

But Sieburth turned to go before the flood of emotion had quite ebbed away. He had seen and absorbed enough to be ripe for the formation of new opinions, and more he did not want.

He cut a wide circle around his home—for he did not want to be questioned—and hurried against the stream of oncoming pedestrians to the place where

the omnibus stood that conveyed the people to their favorite seaside resort several times a day.

He had plenty of time for he could not hope to meet Herma any more to-day. To send her a letter of greeting to her room was all he could do without seeming obtrusive. What would happen next, he must leave to her.

He was the only occupant of the omnibus leaving the city. No wonder either! Every one wanted to be in Königsberg. Perhaps she too! Maybe she had long since forgotten their agreement and preferred to be swallowed up as he had just been, in the howling mob.

The room he had reserved at the hotel was ready for him. There was plenty of room to be had during the Kaiser's visit.

Yes, the Hildebrands had arrived yesterday, the chambermaid said, but whether they had remained or driven back for the festivities, she did not know.

Sieburth wandered along the beach in the twilight, hoping against hope to meet her, but he could not discover a trace of her either on the board-walk or on the parkway.

Then he returned to his room and wrote her a letter full of caution and discretion so that it could be read by her husband without danger, but he hesitated about sending it. If she thought of him, then to-morrow would be time enough.

At supper time in a bad humor he went into the

dining room where groups of those who had remained made themselves comfortable at scattered tables.

His glance wandered about the room. She was not here—nor there either. Then he heard a loud masculine laugh directly behind him and felt the almost too powerful slap of a man's hand on his shoulder.

It was Hildebrand. He himself—tanned, lusty-cheeked and with eyes that still reflected the sky of the Alpine world.

And from a table which he had just passed, surrounded by several strange faces, there was she, smiling in his direction.

Eat alone? That was out of the question. He must sit with them. They were all good friends, if only from as far back as yesterday. And in this way the fate of the evening was decided.

She gave him her hand without speaking. The seat next to her was vacated for him. The friends of yesterday turned out to be simple souls such as one meets in traveling. Nothing interfered with his complete joy in being able to revel in Herma's nearness.

They had just come from town, Hildebrand told him, for his wife had wanted to have a look at the commotion, but now she was satisfied and was not considering making a second expedition there. With him it was different. He could not get his fill of it,

besides he had to be there in case the Crown Prince's reception should include him.

And then he described to-day's procession of the royal personages and to what boundless ecstasies the enthusiasm of the masses had risen.

"Don't you think it touching," he continued, "to see an entire nation looking up to its ruling family in devout admiration? to see all factionalism and internal strife swept aside by the one great emotion of filial attachment? And are not eternal forces at work to weld together an empire which nothing on earth can ever destroy?"

And the happy delusion in which he lived—he, the historian, under whose delicate touch many an empire had already crumbled away—was radiant about his head like a halo.

Sieburth was careful not to relate his own impressions. He merely said that he too had been one of the crowd to-day, but that unfortunately he had missed the procession.

"Then you missed a spectacle that can never be duplicated," Hildebrand condoled with him; "the representatives of three generations of sovereigns proudly standing side by side—a glory and a brilliance which has never been eclipsed even in the time of the Hohenstaufens."

"I feel as Mrs. Hildebrand does," he replied, "I have had enough of it for the time being and I prefer the quiet life at the shore."

"You don't even want to come to to-morrow's banquet?" Hildebrand asked a little astonished.

"I wear no colors, and drink no beer," he answered. "I would not feel as if I belonged there."

Hildebrand—conciliatory as always, suppressed any word of reproach and immediately tried to see the favorable side of his colleague's truancy.

"Then you could keep my wife company," he said. "You must plan something so that the time does not hang too heavily on your hands."

Sieburth did not know whether to feel ashamed of this complete confidence or to be glad of it. Herma, however, looked over at him so innocently as if a happy coincidence had brought him here.

"Suggest something," she said. "I am a stranger here, you know." And since he had no suggestion to offer, Hildebrand came to the rescue.

"I have heard a great deal about the Kurische Nehrung which is called the East Prussian Sahara," he said. "Take a boat which leaves in the morning and goes by way of the Haff to Memel; in two or three hours you are in the midst of it and can be back again by evening."

The friends "of yesterday," worthy small-town jurists and their wives, who knew that part of the country, agreed with him and praised the charms of this dune country with which nothing in the world could compare.

The waiter who knew the place and hour of de-

parture was consulted, and it was decided that Herma, after escorting her husband to his carriage, was to send some one to Sieburth and from that time on was to entrust herself to his care.

And with this decision, they parted.

The room which Sieburth occupied faced the ocean. Sitting on the window sill, he stared into the darkly gleaming gulf in which heaven and earth seemed to meet and from which orange and violet-blue rays darted to the zenith where the night was impatiently waiting for the time of her advance. It took some little time before she established her dominance at the horizon and crowded the reddish glow into smaller and smaller space. First the night would have to be dislodged again and then his happiness would be at hand—the great, the very great, the first great happiness that had come into his life.

So thought Sieburth, ungrateful for all the blessings which Fate had previously showered upon him.

He did not want to go to bed, only to be happy and to wait, but in the end sleep overpowered him and he threw himself lengthwise across the bed, hoping thus to remain half awake, and only crept under the covers when the cold dawn sent shivers through his body.

And now the hour was at hand!

“She will cancel the appointment, she has driven to town with her husband,” he thought in sudden dismay, as the servant’s knuckles rapped on the door.

But, no, the lady in number fifteen was waiting for him in the park, and would he call for her?

And so his highest hope was fulfilled.

There she stood in a white woolen dress, the traveling cape on her arm and a blue veil draped around her cap.

"At last!" he called, coming toward her.

"My husband sends his regards," she said, "and you are to take very good care of me."

She looked at him with wide, trusting eyes. Not so much as a quivering eyelash or a smile of tacit understanding indicated that secret and long planned things were now being consummated.

And then, side by side, they went through the drowsy streets, through the marshlands, through alder and pine woods to the narrow estuary of the Haff where the steamer lay ready for the trip.

Herma told him about her husband's latest neck-breaking feats and how she had always waited with beating heart and anxious thoughts and much looking at the clock.

"Will you be able to endure the thought of his being in danger again and you so far away?" he asked her.

"On the contrary, I hope I can best get over it that way. The more exactly one knows about the awful things one has to overcome, the more one is tortured by fear."

"Couldn't you insist that he abandon mountain climbing for your sake?"

"I have often thought of it. And if I begged him very hard I'm sure he would do it. But when I see him coming home radiant and with the expression of a conqueror in his eyes, I lose my courage. He looks forward to it all year—and should I deprive him of it? Rather than that, I'd sooner suffer a little."

The steamer sheered off and glided with requisite caution into the open Haff which lay before them veiled in the roseate blush of the early morning.

There was nothing of the mainland visible. Only the Nehrung woods—the barren dunes would only come later on—were lost in the misty distance as a narrow jet-black streak which gradually faded away.

The wind which was set in motion by the movement of the boat was fresh and bracing but gradually it chilled the limbs. Their proximity to the glass enclosure, from the open hood of which the warm air of the engine room ascended, proved a comfort and, since there were only a few on deck, they were able to choose a place from which they could watch the ever-changing scenery of the Nehrung in seclusion.

The wood ascending the slopes ended abruptly as though cut off with a knife and the wilderness of the dunes, reddish gold and purple, rose in its place,

sometimes rising from the water in zigzag steep walls and again in rounded hills in wavelike rows next to one another.

"Did you know that these mountains travel?" asked Sieburth, who had learned many things about this freak of nature during the years he had spent here.

She smiled incredulously.

"Mohammed would not be placed in an embarrassing position here. He would only need to exercise a little patience and the mountain would voluntarily come to him."

She wanted to know more details and he told her how the sand rising out of the sea yonder is whirled away by the wind until it forms these dunes which, also driven by the wind, go relentlessly on until they finally, after many years, land over on the Haff side and, like the glaciers of Greenland, are submerged in the water.

"But surely the wind alone can't move such mountains," she cried in horror.

"But it can drive the grains of sand from the peak into the valley and all the subsequent grains after it until the valley fills up and imperceptibly a new peak is formed which in turn meets a similar fate."

"But if there is something in its path, trees or houses, wouldn't that stop it?"

"Nothing stops it; whole forests, whole villages are swallowed up."

"For Heaven's sake! And the inhabitants?"

"They build elsewhere, where for a span of years they have rest; but the horrifying feature is yet to be told: When the mountain has wandered over the forest or village, which may take decades or perhaps a century, their dead and decayed débris reappear on the other side in ghostlike formation."

"But that is terrible," she cried.

"The trunks of the trees stand upright as they did when they lived, but are hollowed out to the very roots so that one has to be careful not to fall into them. One would be irretrievably doomed to death in their interior. The houses here and there have flattened roofs, but are otherwise uninjured, so that one could occupy them again, but the inhabitants upon leaving usually destroyed them, so that in most cases one finds only ruins with remnants of bricks from the hearth or the foundations and whatever else may have been left at the place of disaster—partly because it may have seemed valueless, partly because it could no longer be saved, for the poor unfortunates only separate themselves from their homes at the last moment."

She shuddered.

"Do you think that we may be able to see something of this where we are going?" she asked.

"We must make inquiries. It might be possible."

Her darkening eyes were full of eagerness for the thrill of terror, in regard to which women are apt to

remain children all their lives; and as she lifted her hands pleadingly and said, "Please, please, make it possible, make it possible," she even looked almost a child.

But when she noticed his look of frank delight directed upon her, she turned away, ashamed and a little frightened, and whispered ever so softly, "Don't, please, don't!"

In about an hour they reached the landing place and in the meantime the countryside had taken on an entirely different aspect.

Pastures, potato fields, and vegetable gardens lined the shore, stretching upwards into dark woods which were surmounted only in one spot by the white crest of a dune. Nestling in this oasis were huts with thatched roofs and gayly painted shutters. Wooden horseheads on which artistically carved birds and flowers disported themselves in fantastic fashion surmounted their gables. Even a few tiled roofs peeped from the green, and a pointed church steeple seemed to dominate the scene with a maternal touch.

"How happily people must live here!" she cried, surprised at the charm the picture presented, but then, with alarm, she pointed at the ghastly summit which lay like a threatening fist over it all.

"Will this idyl be overtaken by the same fate?" she cried, and seemed to crawl shuddering into her shell.

The pier was filled with foreign-looking people,

and words of a language which they had never heard before rang out.

"What language are they speaking?" she asked, half in astonishment, half in fright.

"Lithuanian or Lettish," answered Sieburth; "both are spoken on the Nehrung, but I, too, am hearing it for the first time."

And he signaled her to stop and listen to the sound of their voices.

"It is supposed to be somewhat like Greek but I can't notice any resemblance, though, of course, our ears have never heard the true Greek spoken."

They walked along the village street, on either side of which sunflowers and rosebushes bloomed behind wooden palings and which was shaded by fruit trees, but what there was of fruit hanging on them put one in mind of vinegar and tan.

They approached a tavern with a veranda supported by pillars, on which there were tables and benches.

"Let's stop here!" called Herma. "Besides, I'm hungry."

The innkeeper, a portly man after the old Prussian pattern, with hair cut in military fashion and a blond, parted beard, surveyed the city couple with satisfaction and promised to bring them the best that the house afforded.

And almost immediately a platter of fried bacon,

a pitcher of buttermilk and two glasses of whiskey were put before the smiling famished guests.

"Be sure and question the innkeeper," Herma whispered.

And Sieburth asked how far it was to the nearest wandering dune and whether in this vicinity there was a village which, after being buried, had reappeared again.

Now it was the innkeeper's turn to be surprised.

Why, of course! How could anybody not know that? Every one who came knew that. The old Wentainen was still there. The new village could readily be seen from the boat, for it lies close to the shore, about a mile from here—and a mile further on one finds the old village which has reappeared during the present generation; but there was really not much to be seen and the way there was intensely difficult.

Sieburth asked whether a guide was available.

Surely, there were plenty of boys in the village who would consider it a holiday to accompany the guests, only one must not spoil them—a dime would be a very liberal tip.

It did not take long before a barefoot boy of perhaps fourteen, without a shirt and with a sunburnt towhead, stood before them, rubbing one leg against the other in anxious anticipation, and the innkeeper, who in the meantime had busied himself inside, hung a covered basket over his arm, emphasizing the fact

that he should not dare to steal any of its contents.

"For whom is all this?" asked Herma.

"Why, for you, ma'am," he said. "You must have a bite along the way . . . no, don't laugh . . . all this sand will make you hungry."

And so they started off. First through gardens and meadows, then past swamps and ponds along the edges of which stood stilt-legged herons almost hidden from view by alder bushes; then through pine nurseries where the seedlings were no higher than a hand and were hedged about by dried twigs in box-like compartments, doubtless there to protect these tender nurslings from premature burial in the sand.

Here and there a willow eked out its existence torn and crippled in this sand-swept area, and then suddenly the desert came into view.

The desert—using the term without bombast or exaggeration.

Not a blade, not a fiber of root, not a stray leaf cast itself into the way of the hesitant foot in token of mediation or atonement.

Nothing but crunching, sliding, crumbling sand. Sand in hills, sand in troughs, sand in crags, sand in flats, sand in funnels, sand in lumps, sand curled and folded, wavelike as a body of water, bumpy, warty, full of holes here, smooth as silk, evenly flat and polished there. Sand as rock, sand as breath, sand as dance floor, sand as shower bath, sand as far

as eye could reach and bordered only in the clear far distance by a narrow strip of woodland.

To the right and left, far below, lay the blue sea. To the right it seemed lost in the vastness, casting its white breakers against the shore. On the left it glistened softly and wavelessly, and beyond its mirrorlike surface a misty shore rose out of it in violet-and-white striped outlines.

Herma spread her arms wide. "How beautiful it is! How vast it is!" she cried. "It is more beautiful than an Alpine mountain peak!"

Sieburth experienced a feeling of satisfaction as if he had created it all for her, and yet was as much a stranger to all of it as she and had never been there before although he had lived in the neighborhood for years.

"You are right," he agreed. "I don't know of anything more beautiful on German soil either."

"If only the boy were not here," she said, "I wouldn't know what to do for sheer joy!"

"He doesn't bother me particularly," he said, "but as soon as we know the way, we can send him back."

"Oh, yes, do that," she cried. "We can't miss the road back, and then we will be lords of it all."

She pointed far out into the distance and he thought, "You are that already—and sovereign of my life, as well."

The boy, in the meantime, had gone on along the crest of the dunes whistling stupidly and looked

around every once in so often to see whether they were following. For moments at a time he would disappear down a descent and would reappear, climbing the opposite slope—the only strip of shadow in this area of light.

And so they walked farther and farther into the vast desert.

Behind them the noonday chimes sounded from the village in faint, light strokes.

"At six o'clock this evening the boat gets back," she said; "until then we have nothing but time and I'll not make you a gift of a minute of it."

"And that would be the only thing," he replied laughingly, "that I would not accept at your hands."

For a moment she seemed embarrassed, and then she laughed too.

"I find that sand stands the weight better than one would expect," she said. "Here and there it has a crust, as if it were frozen."

"That must be left from the last rain," he answered, "but the sun will melt it just as it does ice."

"That's possible," she said. "I'll take it as it comes and ask no questions of the future."

She walked ahead with swinging stride and he watched the dark outline of her slender form in ecstasy, but as in her growing enthusiasm she walked farther and farther away from him, the darkness of her silhouette seemed to disappear and the white in her dress merged with the whiteness of

the dunes and she seemed dissolved in a sea of light.

"If some day you really were to dissolve," he thought, and a presentiment of deprivation sent a chill through him.

She stopped on the next hill and waited for him to catch up with her.

"What do you suppose that could be down there?" she asked, pointing to a few gray-roofed huts which ducked their shadowy outlines in and out of the green edges on the bay side of the shore.

"More than likely the new Wentainen," he answered, "of which the innkeeper spoke; in that case, the old village cannot be very far away."

He called the boy and asked him.

The new Wentainen, yes, that was it. But the old village was some distance from here and couldn't be seen at this range.

"A distance in which direction?"

The boy pointed somewhere along the dune hills.

"We'll get there all right," Herma exclaimed, impatient to be rid of him.

"Good enough," said Sieburth, "here is your money; you can put your basket down and go home."

"Do you mean you want to leave it here then?" asked the boy after thanking him.

"Have you anything against it, my son?"

"No—if you think you can find it again."

And to make sure, Sieburth rammed his cane into the sand next to it as a guide.

And now they were alone. Alone in the radiant desert, as alone as ever two human beings were or could hope to be.

She pressed her hands against her heart with a sigh either of relief or of depression.

He felt as if he must kneel before her and hold her body close to him, but the pounding of his heart which was by way of making him breathless vetoed the impulse.

"How long I have waited for this moment!" he stammered.

"And I, too, have thought of it always," she said, and looked him full in the eyes. "I don't know whether I was right in doing it for, after all, what do I want of you? I have everything I need on this earth. Yes, even more than I need, and yet something draws me to you; something mysterious, something altogether unexplainable. I have never had a brother; perhaps you are the brother I have always missed."

He pressed his lips together. That was not quite what he aspired to.

But to what did he aspire? To make her his mistress? In that case, he needed only to strain her to him. The sand would swallow up her scream. But she would not cry out; she would not so much as struggle but would succumb a defenseless, writhing, even faintly smiling victim.

But it was just that phase of it that made him

shudder. He could not desecrate what was holy. He had always held himself above that sort of thing.

"But you say nothing at all," he heard her voice saying next to him.

"Have you confidence in me?" he asked.

"Would I have gone alone with you into the desert," she asked in reply, "if I didn't have?"

"And if I were to tell you now that I love you, would you feel yourself endangered?"

"No," she replied, "I know you too well for that."

"A woman never knows a man, for a man doesn't know himself."

"Do you think that a woman knows herself?"

"Herma!"

"No, not that, not that! I have no one in whom to seek refuge if not in you, for my husband must not be shaken out of his dream world . . . don't deprive me of this refuge, I entreat you!"

He reached quietly for her hand and laid it on his arm where it rested willingly but without seeking support.

Silently they walked on.

A wind had come up and drove the sand before them in swirling sheets.

Whenever they went down a slope the sand would give way beneath their feet; it was as though they were slipping into a bottomless pit.

"Where are you leading me?" she asked, freeing her arm.

"Into space," he replied.

"This isn't right," she said. "We did have a goal you know, even if it was only a dead village."

"Why did you ask?"

"Because I wanted to remind you of it. You didn't look for it, you didn't scan the distance—you were just drifting aimlessly on."

"Don't you think I have a good deal to reflect upon?"

"Why do that? Enjoy the moment. What more is needed?"

"But if it should never return; if it takes me only to the threshold of the door—and the door closes—and I stand outside waiting—waiting for the rest of my life?"

"That must not be," she said softly, "and if it were—then you must know that I am standing on the other side of that door waiting too."

"Herma!"

"Oh, no—no!"

There it was again, that timid pleading tone! It sounded like the frightened twittering of a swallow that by mistake had strayed into a human abode. It compelled his silence and stayed his arm. It left him with only one impulse as though the cry had in reality come from the swallow—the impulse: Set her free!

Again they walked along in silence. But this time he really searched the distance for their destination

which in the meantime had come into view. On the bay side and situated in a near-by valley rose foundation walls, rust-red and clay-colored, standing forth from the pale yellow ground in one place as high as a man, in another barely emerging from the sand. Black, specklike objects resembling stones and débris lay strewn round about at a distance. He pointed down toward them.

She followed his finger and was startled.

"Oh, God!" she said, "how little death leaves behind!"

"It seems a great deal to me," he answered; "at other times it leaves nothing."

And then they slid down in the loose sand until they were close to the ruined wall. The foundation was too large and not partitioned off enough inside to have been used as a home.

Obviously, it had been the village church and he told her so.

"Where could the altar have stood?" she asked.

He found no trace of it among the ruins.

But she had discovered the main door which the worshipers had used as an entrance. She went through this into the enclosure, measured her steps and knelt as if the altar were really there. It was all so dear, so childlike and so natural that he, too, became imbued with a feeling of reverence, although of a type altogether different from that which compelled her prayer.

Then they investigated the surroundings and found that the black specks marked the places where stoves had stood. Charred bricks were buried in the ground, ashes lurked in crevices, otherwise no signs of human habitation remained with the exception of a few broken pots and bottles which protruded sharply from the sand.

She had gone ahead and searched and dug about.

Suddenly she screamed out loud and came running back and clutched his arm with every indication of terror.

"What is it?" he asked, with a quieting smile.

Silently she dragged him forward and he felt her whole frame quiver.

"There, there!"

With shy, frightened hands, she pointed straight ahead of her.

The sight was by no means an agreeable one.

This wandering dune had not been satisfied with surface operations but had gone deeper, and though it had unearthed no treasures of the living, it had found the coffins of the dead who had retreated there hoping for eternal peace. Now the coffins lay there, upset, their covers torn off, pitilessly exposing bones—arms and pelvic vertebræ protruded from the sand, strong ribs curved upward, and skulls were scattered around as though ready to be used for bowling.

He took one of them in his hand, balanced it and thought, "Now I could play Hamlet."

Then he noticed that she had put both hands in front of her face and was beginning to sob bitterly.

He stroked her arms, her shoulders and spoke softly and comfortingly to her and when all this did not help he put his arms gently around her and led her back to the church wall where he induced her to sit down in such a way that it formed a back rest for her.

"If I leave her to her own devices, she'll probably calm down," he thought.

But there was no sign that she was regaining her self-control.

She squatted with her knees drawn up and her head pillowed in her arms and cried to break her heart.

He sat down next to her and still speaking soothing words tried to take her hands from her face.

But she would not be comforted until suddenly in the midst of her tears, she bent towards him and her head seeking support sank against his heart.

"Now she is mine," he thought, caressing her, "and always will be."

All sorts of oaths and vows whirled through his brain, but the blessedness of sharing the greatest joys in life with a dearly loved woman superseded all these.

Then gradually her speech returned.

"Don't leave me, oh, please don't leave me!" she whispered, still sobbing.

"Why should I leave you, child," he said, "when my only thought is to be with you?"

"And yet—and yet that will never be."

"Why not?"

"Something will happen that will separate you from me forever."

"What could that possibly be?"

"I don't know—but I feel it—I'm sure of it, for what we are doing now is contrary to the laws of Nature . . . I love my husband . . . I've never loved any one but him . . . I don't believe I ever could love any one but him . . . and how this situation with you has come about, I don't know, nor understand. There is a power that emanates from you . . . one has to feel as you do . . . one must have the same desires you have . . . Do you at least love me?"

Instead of answering her, he took her head with his right hand, turned it towards him and kissed her on the mouth.

She did not try to stop him, but she whimpered softly all the while.

"What is it?" he asked tenderly.

"It hurts! You mustn't do it again. It hurts me so!"

But when, puzzled, he stopped, she threw both

arms around his neck, nestled her head against his neck and started to cry again.

She stayed there a long time. He spoke softly and caressingly and she quieted down. As she straightened up and looked at him with tear-dimmed eyes, there was even a faint smile on her face.

"Do you think it would still hurt?" he asked.

"Try it," she whispered.

She clung to his lips in a long kiss but suddenly shuddered again, turned away and wiped the sand from her lips.

He looked around then and noticed that they were enveloped in a cloud of sand which had probably been blowing over them unobserved for some time. The folds of Herma's dress, her lap, her shoes were filled with sand—there was sand in his sleeves and his collar—sand in broad stripes on her neck, and sand fell in drizzling streams from her hair to her cheeks.

Then, as he looked skyward, he saw white gleaming swaths falling over the crest of the dunes, whirling upward here and darting tongue-like toward the ground there as if to lick it.

As far as eye could reach the air was filled with a powder-like mist through which the sunbeams filtered like a shower of gold.

"We must go back," he said, hiding his dismay.

She, too, looked heavenward but only found joy in the novelty of the experience.

"The mountains are smoking," she said, "as if they wanted to belch out fire."

And when the sun pierced the swirling pillars of sand, they really did look like wandering flames.

He took Herma by the hand and led her from the province of the dead up the nearest incline toward the sandstorm which was now passing over them with strange sounds—panting, grating, scraping and shrilly whistling.

Not a trace of the path by which they had come was to be seen. The footprints had long since been covered. Bay and sea were framed like milk-white walls against the sky and where the sun was supposed to be, concentric fiery circles, reaching enormous dimensions, played about in all shades of the rainbow.

"Hold a cloth over your mouth and nose and follow in my footsteps; in half an hour we will have reached safety."

But she did not want to walk behind him. With a sort of jubilant shout, although there was no cause for jubilation, she rushed ahead of him and went over heights and into depths, whichever the wavy formation of the dunes demanded.

Her dress fluttered like a white flag and the loosened veil like a blue pennant above it.

At first she had stooped in an effort to hold her skirt over her knees but then she let it fly as it would

and Sieburth was privileged to see the rounded outlines of her shapely legs.

He would gladly have let her run as she liked but he noticed that several times she came perilously near the precipice over the bay. Under ordinary conditions, it would not have been dangerous but now that the ground upon which they walked or stood was in this floodlike motion, she could, through a false step, be hurled below and engulfed and any one who tried to save her would meet the same fate.

Therefore he hurried after her, took her by the shoulder and showed her the distance and the direction. She nodded obediently and ran on.

It was lucky that there was no possibility of losing one's way—the bay was to the right, the sea at the left, so eventually they had to reach their goal.

At times they found themselves in a sort of caldron out of which they could not see into the distance, but the course remained the same and could be proven on any height even if one could not see the path or street.

He saw her come to a sudden halt and point to a pole on which there was a sign.

No doubt a signpost.

She, too, seemed to consider it as such, and since the correctness of the way had thereby been established, she did not pay any further attention to it and wanted to go on.

An instinctive feeling impelled him to call "Stop" to her through his hollowed hands.

She heard him and again obeyed. And when he caught up with her and read the sign he saw through the mist of the sand clouds which blew constantly over it almost obscuring it, the half-hidden words, "Danger!—Quicksand!"

The fright caused chills to creep down his back. He had heard and read much about the danger attached to this word and realized that had she gone on she would have courted death and that he might have seen her sink before his eyes without being able to save her.

He dug his fingers into her shoulder so deeply that she screamed.

"What did I do?" she cried up to him plaintively.

"Stay here with me. I'll explain it to you later."

And now, side by side, they walked silently through the drifting, bursting, trickling sand in which every particle larger than a grain formed a ridge which disappeared in a moment to make room for another just as fleeting.

Ridge upon ridge in countless rows were furrowed by the wind as they stepped rapidly over them.

When they saw the first bit of green before them, before whose protecting strength the driving sand had called a halt, he remembered the basket, the contents of which they could well have used as they were both trembling with hunger, and he thought,

too, of his old cane which had traveled the world over with him and which was buried in the sand.

He did not give a thought to searching for it for they would probably never have found it.

He regarded it as a sacrifice to the gods who had mercifully guided them back, so did not complain.

Herma dragged herself wretchedly along on his arm, for her shoes, which in the meantime had filled with sand, weighed her down as if each were a ton.

So she had to allow him to loosen the laces and rub the feet, which were almost paralyzed, back to sensibility. Then she was once again in fine fettle and relived the entire adventure. She wanted to know, too, why he had so suddenly torn her away from the signpost.

Then he told her how the sign had read and what danger had threatened her.

She looked at him with the wide, frightened eyes of a child and did not joke any more.

The innkeeper received them with well-meant reproaches for having sent the guide back.

"Such sandstorms occur here frequently," he said, "and if one does not know the way, one can come to grief." He assured them that the loss of the basket did not matter and that he would have somebody search for the stick, but it doubtless lay buried so deep that it might be years or decades until it came to view again.

"Perhaps by that time we'll both be old and sepa-

rated from each other by a great distance," said Herma; "then maybe you'll write me a card and we'll both be happy over it."

She did not show by either a word or a look that she remembered what happened between them by the old church wall, but her clinging confidence indicated how close she felt to him.

He sat opposite her with an overpowering feeling of happiness and ate, drank and supervised what she ate of the coarse food so that her stomach would not be spoiled.

Like a pampered, good-hearted child she devoted herself enthusiastically and playfully to the enjoyment of the moment. Not a thought of what would follow, what must follow, disturbed the gay humor she reflected.

Only when they sat again by the glass-covered engine room on deck in the sinking twilight, soothed by the comforting warmth which made them forget the chill of the autumnal night, the thoughts which had long been held in abeyance by a salutary instinct, recurred.

"It is all like a dream," she said, with closed lids as if addressing herself; but then looking at him intently with wide-open eyes, she added, "and it must remain a dream."

"We can no more erase what has occurred," he said, "than we can return to the relationship that existed between us only this morning. If I take

your hand in mine and call you by the intimate pronoun, which, by the way, first crossed your lips, it seems natural, almost to be taken for granted, while this morning it would have seemed a lack of respect, almost a crime . . . If we were to revert to our previous status, we should be playing a farce which neither of us could endure for any length of time."

"But what is to come of it?" she stammered.

"Does no presentiment, no inner urge answer that question? Have you no force within you that cries out for fulfillment, nor anything of a desire to cherish a treasure or bestow a gift?"

"When you talk like that I have nothing but fear," she whispered.

"Then all of it was only a whim."

"No, no, no, for Heaven's sake, no!"

"An emotional upheaval at best, no more than that, while I have put my life at your disposal—since the first day I met you—and now that you are mine, I am to lose you. Herma, no good will come of it."

She reached with both hands for his right hand and held it tight.

"Don't torture me, give me time—only a few days, I beg of you!"

"And I don't want to meet anybody else here. I'm leaving to-morrow morning early."

"And are not coming back again?"

"I must not."

"As soon as my husband goes back, perhaps already to-morrow, I move to Follenius'. Follenius told me that he has invited you. If you were to accept the invitation . . ."

She hesitated. His smile even more than his refusal assured her that it was not to be considered.

"Please have patience," she begged. "I don't know yet how but I will arrange that we see each other again—very soon—and that we can be alone—all alone. Then I will know what I can venture—what I must—what I—but please, please have patience until then."

He kissed her hand in assent and said nothing more about it. . . .

As they walked toward the hotel through the dark woods she, weary from the day's exertions, hung on his arm in utter exhaustion.

He supported her, almost carried her, but did not touch her lips again.

In front of her door, she bade him a short, almost timid good-by.

When he reached his room, he found a telegram on the table which read, "Advise you not to be missing at to-day's banquet. It is known that you are in the vicinity and your attendance is expected. Wendland."

Laughing scornfully, he tore it up and thought no more about it.

CHAPTER XV

WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE RAINY NIGHT

THE crow had become friendly again.

When, on his return, Sieburth approached the cage, she did not fly into its remotest corner but quietly took the proffered morsel; in fact, she even allowed him to ruff her neck a little.

Sieburth asked the sisters how they had accomplished this miracle. At first they did not want to come out with it, but finally the fact that they had kept the young bird in the house and nursed it tenderly came to light. They spent hours with it despite its thieving and destructive tendencies, to say nothing of worse qualities.

Sieburth had brought each of them a pound of chocolates at which they nibbled gratefully. Cilly, too, was jolly and natural and gave no hint that within her a strong, avidly intellectual spirit was keeping its wings spread for instant soaring in order not to be outdistanced by him.

They took some long walks with him, talked about any and all things and found delight in the sheer joy of living.

The Privy Councilor returned two days after Sieburth. He had much to tell of the brilliance of

the great banquet at which the Crown Prince had spoken warm and far-reaching words, and he expressed regret that Sieburth had not seen fit to follow his advice.

"I would not go so far as to say that your absence did you any great amount of harm," he said, "but it is always a good idea to live up to what is expected of you. These things may be nothing but figments of the imagination but one's enemies can forge weapons even out of these."

There was something of the anxiety of a father-in-law in this well-meant warning and Sieburth decided to be seen there a little less often.

All of his thoughts clung to the great adventure of recent days and to the promise his beloved had given him.

Even his work was beginning to suffer. The narrow train of thought that he usually pursued without any effort was everywhere obstructed and every by-path led into space.

He did not stop to consider what was about to happen. True, his conscience troubled him when he thought of her warm-hearted, high-minded husband whom he was robbing of her; but that could not be helped now, this was a man-to-man combat and the victor carried off the bride.

"But do I want to carry her off?" he asked himself. "Do I want to sacrifice my prized and blessed solitude for a scandal which would be inevitable, or

mustn't I rather see to it that everything between us may remain absolutely secret?"

But how would she, the most sensitive of the sensitive, manage to bear this secrecy which was really nothing but a shameless deceit? And even if such a miracle were to take place, how would it be possible to conceal from espionage and discovery in this cramped town, in this prying set, relations open to all sorts of suspicion?

There was nothing but danger and unfathomable problems, no matter how you looked at it. But be that as it may! First he must have the fulfillment of that promise; first, that great moment which would spell salvation or reprobation must be granted him, that moment which carried with it boundless joy or lifelong longing . . .

Perhaps five or six days had gone by since his return when he received the following letter:

DEAR FRIEND!

Our mutual friend happily coincided with my desire to become acquainted with the beauties of the coast of Samland. Therefore, within the next few days, we will take a carriage trip there with the children and the governess which will also take us to Rauschen. In fact we plan to spend the night there, and it is expected that you, being acquainted with the neighborhood, will act as guide. Even though I am rather tied down, I think it will be possible for us to spend an hour together unobserved. I can't say more. I would like to but the pen does

not permit of it. This is already the fourth letter I've started. There is always something cold, false or deceptive in them. I must wait until I look into your eyes and hold your hands in mine. I count the hours until then.

Your HERMA.

Was that love, or was it not? Yes, yes, yes, a thousand times yes!

And he, too, counted the hours until in the early afternoon two days later another letter, brought by the servant at the inn, arrived in a different handwriting—oh, he knew it well enough; for years it had furnished him with the scant substitute for love messages. It read:

DEAR FRIEND!

We have been passing each other by for a long time. I think it foolish and I hope you agree with me. Our mutual friend, with whom in the meantime I have become too well acquainted not to be able to understand what draws you to her, told me that you have taken root here. We would like to entrust ourselves to you. If you can manage to get free of your work for a few hours, will you accompany us to the shore and wherever else you would like to take us?

As ever, faithfully yours,

MARION F.

He stared at the sheet in front of him for at least a quarter of an hour but not one word of it was a key to what was behind it all.

"Our mutual friend"—so both of them had expressed themselves.

Was she setting a trap for him? Was she actually reconciled? Who could tell that?

At any rate, Herma was here. What she brought with her, what surrounded her, had to be taken into the bargain.

He dressed with more care than usual and went down to Bosien's Inn.

Marion was waiting for him on the veranda. The rosy bloom of her cheeks had turned a tan and from this darker background her eyes shone that much more victoriously blue.

Two good-looking boys of six and eight, both resembling the father with their well-set heads and hair that rose bushily from their foreheads, were playing around her, and an English governess was in attendance at a discreet distance.

As Marion stretched her hand out to him smiling gently, she really seemed, without reservation, the same old friend that she once had been.

"Thank you for coming so soon," she said, "and even though I don't flatter myself that I am the principal attraction, I am glad that you're here."

"Don't forget, dear friend," he answered, "that you were the one who put distance between us. If it had depended upon me, things would never have changed between us."

"It is possible that I'm the guilty one," she an-

swered, "all of us are slaves to our moods, but these moods do not arise or grow without cause and if at that time—"

She paused, for the boys crowded forward to shake hands with him.

He greeted them like an old friend although he would hardly have recognized them again, and they told him about the coach and four and the steam-driven mill he once gave them and with which they still played.

Then they were sent away and Marion continued the conversation. "I admire your politeness. You haven't once turned searchingly around even though our friend is not yet here. All of us could not be accommodated at the inn, so we found lodgings for her at the forester's cottage. I advised her to rest for she is delicate and tires easily, but now she will be able to be on hand again. If it is agreeable to you, we will go and call for her."

He had a distinct feeling that he ought to prolong this being together a little longer, but the desire to see his dear one again was too great to permit of any opposition.

So they started, Marion and he ahead, and the governess to whom he had been introduced bringing up the rear with the boys.

He knew perfectly well that the air was still charged with all sorts of questions concerning Herma, but he lacked the necessary self-possession to broach

the subject, since it involved the risk of making matters worse by a false step on the slippery ground. Besides, he hoped to stifle before long any possible suspicion by their open, unconcerned intercourse.

The forester's cottage faced gable-side to the street. A flower garden enclosed by a wooden fence was in front of it. She stood at one of the windows close to the door that led into the open, waiting as Marion had waited.

"Careful now!" he warned himself.

And as he doffed his hat and called a cheery "Welcome," not even a detective could have discovered a flaw.

Neither did Herma exhibit any stiffness or confusion. Laughingly, she beckoned to him. She was only going to put on her hat and then she would be with them.

He carefully avoided looking sideways but he was conscious of Marion's burning gaze.

A new joy welled up within him as he saw Herma appear on the threshold, for the door of the gable-side was directly next to her room and she would be able to go out of doors unseen and unheard at any time, day or night. Their getting together was assured.

She looked pale and unrefreshed. Although she still laughed, her eyes, flickering, unnaturally large and restless, roved from Marion to him and from him to Marion.

Then she told with a rapture that accentuated her nervous tension, of the charm of that ride along the shore with its magnificent view of the sea and its foaming breakers which were carried to the shore like narrow fields of snow pushed by gigantic hands.

"Her thoughts always stray to the mountains," he thought, tormented by a vague jealousy.

And then they entrusted themselves to his guidance.

He knew of nothing lovelier than the precipice of the Sassau woods, so he took that direction.

When at some distance they passed his house which shone gray and drab among the trees he pointed to it and mentioned that he lived there.

They all wanted to see it.

"There is little of interest there," he dissuaded, "except, perhaps, a crow which gives me a great deal of trouble." For during the last few nights, she had again become unruly.

All of them, particularly the boys, wanted to know all about the crow, and when he had told them the story, they insisted upon being taken to her; but by this time they had gone far beyond the house and he consoled them with the promise of going there on the way back.

So they strolled through the woods, kept busy by the boys who came running to Sieburth for information now with a flower or again with a beetle or a stone for as a professor it was his duty to know

everything. Now and then they dragged their "Mammi" to a particular spot which they considered remarkable for some reason or other, and so it happened that he had a few moments alone with Herma.

"Does she know of our outing?" he asked quickly, when he noticed that they were out of earshot.

She affirmed it.

"And yet has not referred to it? Then we must speak of it."

And when Marion who obviously disliked being separated from them had rejoined them again, he began to describe their adventure in terms that were far more glowing than so simple an experience warranted.

"I've blundered again," he thought, for when he saw Marion's eager eyes, it was clear to him that she would be entitled to drawing the conclusion that after the experience they had lived through together, a strong tie must exist between them.

Herma had no idea of his tribulation. She was quiet most of the time, only interjecting an ecstatic word into his story every now and then which clearly showed with what intense interest she recalled that day.

In the meantime they had reached the fringe of the woods and stood on the narrow edge of the crest of the dunes.

Dark clouds hung low over the sea, whose gray-blue surface lying motionless stared up at them in

somber indifference like the mysterious eye of this mysterious world. The tide caressed the shore with scarcely audible sounds. Black fishing boats, anchored far out, rocked as though in space; a short scarlet stripe fringed raylike toward the top indicated the spot at which the sea touched the horizon, otherwise one could not have separated one from the other. Heaven and earth had grown into one All in which what called itself man was timidly lost beyond redemption.

They all stood, speechless, overawed by this unexpected vision. Even the questions of the boys were silenced. They looked up at their mother with big, reverent eyes as though only through her the spell which bound even their young souls could be broken.

Herma's hands were folded in her lap. Sieburth did not dare to read the thoughts revealed in her face.

He only felt how very much she was affected and cursed the fate that compelled their souls to remain apart.

Marion Follenius was the first to pull herself together.

"I have seen this any number of times, yet it always overwhelms me again. I would only like to know how one enjoys it the most—alone—or with a companion."

Was it a coincidence that at these last words her

glance should wander from Sieburth to Herma and searchingly back to him?

"There are people who feast on Nature," he said, purposely giving a cynical twist to their mood, "as they would eat a sumptuous dinner. One must be moderate, even in regard to this, otherwise our emotional life suffers from fatty degeneration and renders us unfit for our daily tasks. What would become of us if we were to allow the scene we have just witnessed to work us up to the highest pitch? Run along, boys! Soon there will be some climbing for you!"

At this every foot was again firmly planted on the earth and Marion had no further opportunity to gather evidences of private understandings.

The purple stars of the strand asters were blooming on the barren height along which they walked; the red centaury herb and the feathery strand pinks were also in evidence but the blue-spiked sea holly had already bloomed and could only give of its fruit, but was still the prettiest of them all.

Herma searched and gathered with such an energy that one would have believed there was no room for another thought in her head and Sieburth let her go on. He surmised that in this manner she hoped to avoid idle gossip.

And for this reason he had to walk next to Marion and make conversation with her.

She regretted that he had stayed away from the

festivities in connection with the Kaiser's visit and could not resist saying that no doubt he had found more interesting things to do. Her husband had received the title of Councilor of Commerce which had been withheld from him up to this time on account of his political leanings and she too had received a decoration to which she was really not as yet entitled.

Sieburth tendered his congratulations and again ventured to call her "my princess," as he had often done in the days of their unclouded friendship, but the jest jarred and failed in its purpose.

When they reached the site of the landslide the boys fairly wallowed in the chaos of the overturned trees, tumbled about the trunks, and struggled with the branches.

Helplessly the governess scolded after them, but Marion smilingly allowed them to do as they liked.

It seemed as if her thoughts were far away, as if she were evolving plans or battling with new resolutions.

Herma bemoaned the fate of these giants doomed to die whose respite was soon to be ended; then she turned to her bouquet again, the completion of which seemed to absorb her entirely.

Sieburth could not help thinking of another nose-gay which had been gathered for him not so very long ago, and not so far from this spot, and a guilty feeling possessed him. His glance wandered down

the landslide toward the tree trunk which had been his retreat and support when he had imparted his intellectual plans to the friend who thirsted for knowledge.

How far away all of it seemed to-day! And how far away that which before had constituted his existence!

Blotted out, submerged, banished, as though resting at the bottom of the sea with the waves rolling over it.

In the meantime the two boys had become so unmanageable that they had to be brought back by force.

"I'll get them by the coat collars and bring them to you," said Sieburth.

But Marion's motherly care would not entrust them to a stranger. With the governess, she started out, slipping and clambering on the way, to catch them and bring them back.

So he was able to talk to Herma for a few minutes without arousing Marion's suspicions.

"At what time this evening will you be alone?" he asked.

"Even if I retire early," she answered, "I must expect that should I leave the house it will be observed."

"Then you, too, have noticed that she watches?"

"She has drawn me out ever since I have been her

guest. I assume that she was your beloved and that you left her, perhaps even on my account."

"She never had a declaration of love from me, nor anything more than a kiss on her hand."

"That makes it so much worse. Then she goes about feeling that you have spurned her."

"I think she has too much vanity for that—but forget about her. . . . I surely can't meet you in front of your house, but when we get back, pay close attention to the spot at which I leave you."

"Aren't you going to eat supper with us?"

"No, I will beg off out of consideration for your fatigue. At the place at which I leave you—"

"But it will seem peculiar if you don't accompany us at least as far as the inn."

"Well then, I'll make a false start. I will be waiting from ten o'clock on at the spot where I do this."

"That is too early."

"Well then, from eleven o'clock on . . . till—well, till toward morning. Take a good look at the place so that you won't miss it in the dark."

At this moment the culprits bobbed up from below followed by their mother, who even in the midst of her scolding threw a hunter's look at the pair who were making a serious effort to seem vitally interested in their reappearance.

The poor little governess who was afraid of being

considered a poor disciplinarian brought up the rear crying.

It was an animated family scene. To top it all, during the homeward journey, which left a good deal to be desired in the way of pleasure, a gentle drizzling rain in which the farmer delights for September planting, but which could easily have been dispensed with in this instance, overtook them.

They protected themselves as best they could and hurried silently to shelter. There was no further thought given to the contemplated visit to Sieburth's house.

At the edge of the woods, within sight of the village which could be reached directly by a broad sand path, Sieburth, with a meaning look at Herma, begged to be allowed to leave them and Marion was in such bad humor that she did not even try to detain him.

Herma, on the other hand, insisted with well-feigned merriment that he fulfill his duty as a cavalier by becoming completely drenched and would not let him go until he had escorted them to the door of the inn.

One parted hastily, the thought of changing into dry clothes uppermost in one's mind, and there was no further mention of dining together.

They planned to continue their journey early the next morning, and it was not expected that Sieburth come down and say good-by.

Breathing a sigh of relief at the termination of these hours of rope-dancing, he started in the early twilight for his home.

How to spend the time that intervened between now and their next meeting?

It was nearly seven and night was already falling.

The evening meal was brought in around eight o'clock. He did not have the food warmed as usual for he wanted to be alone again as quickly as possible.

At quarter past eight the servant was off and now the waiting began all over again.

The rain, which was increasing in volume hour by hour, swept past the open windows in glistening streams.

Remaining out-of-doors with her was out of the question, but would she be willing to come to his house, wouldn't she much rather—

There—what was that?

Were not footsteps coming towards him from the path in the woods? Inaudible on the mossy ground, but rustling in the huckleberry bushes and crackling on the dry branches, halting at times, and then hurrying forward.

Might it be she already— Would it be possible that she—

He looked at the clock. No, it couldn't be! At nine o'clock the risk was unthinkable.

"Who is there?" he called out into the night.

A woman's dark form stepped uncertainly, hesi-

tatingly, into the shaft of light of his lamp. The blond head of Marion Follenius showed from under the hood of the raincoat.

Fright seized him. Obviously, she had come to make her own observations. If Herma were now—

The visitor quickly regained her self-possession.

"It had certainly not been my intention to make my presence known," she said with her usual poise, leaning laughingly towards him through the open window. "I had put our friend to bed, and just wanted to satisfy myself, unobserved, how you actually lived—perhaps also to become acquainted with your famous crow on whose account my boys cried themselves to sleep, because they had not seen her."

"She is sitting behind you," Sieburth said, pointing to the cage.

But she did not even turn around. With her arms folded and leaning on the window sill, she stood smiling at him almost mockingly.

"I don't know if I may presume . . ." said Sieburth.

"To let me stand here in the rain," she concluded.

Thereupon he stepped to the front door and invited her to come in.

"You may even relieve me of my rubber coat," she continued, looking around the room, "and hang it out in the corridor so that it won't drop on the floor here."

He helped her to unbutton her coat and pull back the hood.

Now she stood erect in her tight-fitting dress, her arms stretched backwards so that her breasts were revealed in their roundness.

Not triumphant exactly, but as a benefactress prepared to dispense her gifts.

"How will this end?" thought Sieburth, throwing a furtive glance at the clock.

Within an hour she would have to be back at the inn if the danger of meeting Herma was to be averted.

She went to the desk and took a cursory look at the books and pamphlets.

Then turning, she said, "Is there something here on which a tired woman may sit down and rest?"

He pointed to the rickety sofa over the torn cover of which he had thrown a traveling robe, and thought in astonishment, "With what absolute directness she markets her wares!"

And then it occurred to him that he must protect her to the best of his ability.

Though it was hardly probable that any one should come to him at this hour, it was within the range of possibility.

He closed the window and pulled down the blinds, drawing them tightly together so that no one could see through them.

"I admire the care," she said from her sofa corner,

still smiling, "with which you prepare for the big scene that is to follow. It is easy to see that you have had plenty of practice in receiving late lady visitors."

That was plain, too plain to be in good taste.

Or was she having a good time at his expense?

He deliberated. There were two possibilities: either she had come here to celebrate an amorous hour or she suspected Herma and wanted to be on the spot when she arrived, enjoying his embarrassment in the meantime.

And when he moved his desk chair closer to her, she continued, "This is fine, now it will be easy for you to find yourself at my side at the proper moment."

"Did you come here, Marion, to make fun of me?" he asked.

She sighed faintly. "Good Lord, how do I know?" she said. "One is driven by restlessness, and the better plan is not to try to account for what one does or says."

"That wasn't your way formerly," he objected.

"One changes," she replied.

"You must not believe, dear Marion," he began opening his counter-attack, "that I do not understand the spirit of this hour. I understand perfectly well what it promises but have an equally full comprehension of what it threatens."

"And so, true to my profession, I will philosophize

a little," she scoffed; "that impresses, and also helps to pass the time until I can see my guest to the door."

"This plan will never work out," he thought; "she is not stupid enough for that."

He stood up and took hold of her shoulders.

"Have you made clear to yourself what this step means?"

She struggled trembling under his grip.

"Why do you use physical force?" she complained.

"Do you love me enough to risk that?"

"Whether I love you or not has nothing to do with it. It's a simple matter for a man to overpower a woman who trusts herself to him as you have done even if he does not love her. But we live in a correct world and we all possess a sense of duty even if we try to laugh it away, and I must know what obligations I assume if I should have the good fortune to become more than friend."

"None whatever," she said laughingly. "Save your notions about duty for your lectures. Any man who holds a woman as you now hold me doesn't give a rap about it, anyway."

Frightened, he released her. She was forging links of a chain with which she hoped to make him completely helpless out of his every word and every gesture.

"Forgive the brutality which is not my usual habit," he said. "I allowed myself to be carried

away to that extent because I didn't know how else to drive the facts home emphatically enough."

She shrugged her shoulders scornfully. She read nothing in his explanation except a desire to back out.

He reflected. To let her go away untouched to-night and by so doing not turn her into his worst enemy was almost equivalent to squaring the circle.

And suddenly a rash thought mounted to his brain: "A more beautiful woman has never been within your reach. Take her—she will have had her way and then you will be rid of her!"

But simultaneously the other one stood before him, she who had filled his life with light and longing for the last half-year and who at this moment sat in a dark room peering into the rain waiting to bring him joy and fulfillment!

This not only would mean throwing himself away on her but would be desecrating and besmirching the finest thing life had to offer.

So away with it, come what may!

A few other ideas flashed through his brain, full of cynical self-abandonment and pitiful hypocrisy. They would have saved him from her hatred but he cast them aside—these too. For he felt himself consecrated through the blessing of that other one, and above such subterfuges.

So there was nothing for him to do but to continue bravely playing the part of a coward in the game of love.

"Now listen to me sensibly, Marion," he said, playing the smug pedant. "You know that I am most friendly to you. I would let myself be cut up into bits for you, I swear to you, but please do forgive me when I say that I place my work above you, above any woman on this earth."

"Your career, you mean to say," she interposed, laughing scornfully.

"No, that is not so," he defended himself, "for how does a man further his career more easily than through the favor of a beautiful, influential woman?—The greater part of the Faculty visit your hospitable home. Our estimable 'Three Fates' can be counted among your friends—and what that may mean to a poor assistant professor you know better than any one else . . . It would only be necessary for me to place my fate in your hands and I could consider myself secure. . . . But I argue differently: Your friendship is a valued, I might say my most valued, possession . . . not because of my career as you somewhat spitefully remarked, but because I found in it intellectual support"—["God forgive me for this nonsense," he thought]—"an intellectual support, I repeat, to which I owe many an idea. I dare not endanger it by striving for something which is at the same time higher and lower . . . there are excellent reasons to account for this apparent contradiction, for the man who enjoys the favor of a woman is always at the same time her toy.

And I will not become your toy, my princess. That would inevitably lead to a break assuming that you have not already given me my discharge; so I beg you to preserve for me your friendship by leaving things as they were for a long time apart from the accidental estrangement which I deeply regretted and which now that we have been able to talk it over, will, I hope, come to an end . . . Remain to me what you have been, and every thought that occurs to me, every line I shall write will be your thanks and your reward."

"If that isn't a pretty speech!" he thought. "And even if it shouldn't make an impression on her, it will at least enable her to make a graceful exit."

While listening to him Marion Follenius had nestled in the corner of the sofa. Now that he had finished she sat, with closed eyes, motionless and silent—a woman who was setting her house in order. A spasmodic twitching lurked about her tightly compressed lips, but it was not the expression of suppressed tears.

Then suddenly she rose, measuring him with a clear, sure look, and in a metallic voice began, "If I were to agree with you in everything, dear friend, it would be unnatural, and you would not believe me; but I hope that I can manage to reach the conclusion proper to the occasion. It is very warm and comfortable in the corner of this sofa and if I were to follow my own inclination, I would discuss with you

at great length how to cement and stabilize our friendship, but I am afraid my time is up, so please get me my coat right away, which no doubt has dried meanwhile."

Relieved, he carried out her suggestion and when he returned, he found her as on her entrance, erect and with her arms stretched backwards, in the center of the room, staring gloomily into the lamplight.

"What a handsome woman she is," he thought in involuntary admiration of the lines of her body, "and how well she knows how to handle the situation!"

As he helped her into her coat and prepared to go out, he felt as though he, and not she, had been scorned and discarded.

But uppermost was the feeling of relief in that he would not have to face his beloved in dishonor.

"Is there still time enough?" he asked himself, but he was careful not to look in the direction of the wall clock. For if Marion had noticed it, she would have jumped to conclusions and all would have been lost.

He extinguished the lamp and then they went out.

The rain still fell in sheets. The valley lay before them, gray-black and in opaque obscurity.

"I will take you down by a shorter route," he said with the object of avoiding Herma—and he reached for Marion's hand. She started back as though touched by a red-hot iron, but after hasty reflection, she herself stretched her hand out to him.

So he escorted her down the crude wooden steps which led to the village between garden fences. When her eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, she freed herself quickly and tried to find the way unassisted.

The houses lay there as if asleep. There was no vestige of light anywheres.

As they neared the forester's cottage, for they had to pass it, fear overcame him.

If the gable door were to open now! If Herma's figure were to appear in the doorway!

But everything—thank God—remained buried in night and in stillness.

Furtively, he watched his companion who was walking silently at his side, for she had curtailed his every attempt at conversation.

She did not once glance in the direction of the gable window. She seemed to have forgotten the very existence of her new friend.

In front of the door of the inn, he had to say a word of farewell—a word which at the same time would pave the way for future relations.

"Will our friendship ever be as of old?" he asked.

She laughed out loud.

"On the contrary! It will become a much more intimate one!"

With which she threw him her hand to shake, opened the door with the other and disappeared into the hall.

Free! Released from all trouble and care! For the possibility of further spying on her part seemed pretty much out of the question.

But that she did not make even a veiled reference to Herma seemed astounding, seemed dangerous.

Be that as it may! The hour of fulfillment had arrived! The portals to happiness stood wide open! Let what lay behind perish in oblivion.

He walked quickly to the agreed spot.

There, leaning against a tree, was a woman's body.

For God's sake, it was she! Had arrived there before he had!

He stormed towards her and grasped her in his arms.

"How long have you been waiting?"

"I don't know."

"For a long time?"

"I don't know."

Defenseless, helpless, she clung to him. She was wearing a coat of some fluffy material which seemed soaked through and through.

He drew her along with him. She offered no resistance.

As he pushed the house door open, and the inside lay ahead of them like a dark cavern, a shudder passed through her frame but she did not falter, but followed obediently.

The odor of the perfume Marion always used was wafted toward them from the room in telltale waves.

He was terrified, but she did not seem to notice anything. She seemed deprived of all her senses by the appalling experience through which she was passing.

"You must take off your coat, dear."

"I can't."

"You'll catch your death of cold. You must."

"I can't."

She pressed the fingers of both hands tightly across her breast. He loosened them forcibly and she sank exhausted into his arms.

And as he opened the buttons of the coat, he felt that there was nothing underneath but a shirt covering the naked breast.

She stammered in shame: "She gave out the dress to be dried—and I haven't another with me."

He quickly got the rough woolen cape that hung in the hall for emergencies thinking, "So this was the means Marion employed to make her helpless." Then he took the wet coat carefully from her shoulders which faintly glowed in the darkness, and wrapped the shivering form in the warm woolen stuff which clung to her cozily. He led her to the same sofa corner in which Marion had sat half an hour earlier and which still seemed to retain her atmosphere.

She sank back and cowered there without making a sound so that the shadowy little bundle was hardly recognizable.

"We must stay in the dark," he said, bending toward her, and the thought surged through him, "What luck that she was already gone by the time I passed with the other one!"

"But I can pull up the shades," he continued, "so that I get at least a glimpse of you."

And while he did so, the rain was beating furiously against the window panes.

The chair in which he had sat at a proper distance opposite Marion still stood there. He pushed it away with his foot and flung himself down beside Herma on the creaking sofa.

Her features could now be discerned to some extent. There was the austere mouth, the narrow nose, but the eyes resembled nothing but dark caverns. He could not tell whether they were open or closed.

He imprinted two tender kisses on them but when he tried to put his arm around her, she pressed herself so closely into the sofa that there was no room for his hand.

"Are you afraid of me, dear?" he asked.

"No."

"Why do you draw away from me?"

She did not answer.

"Have you forgiven me for keeping you waiting?"

"I have nothing to forgive. I did not know the time and just left at random; I longed to be with you."

And now she allowed herself to be drawn into his arms.

But all the while the thought that during the time she spent in waiting, she might have noticed something of that other adventure, disturbed him.

"Did you see a light in here, through the trees?"

She affirmed this.

"And yet you did not come here?"

"I wanted to follow your directions exactly, and when the light was put out, I thought: 'Now he is coming to call for you'—but you did not come."

"You are still trembling, darling. Are you cold?"

"I tremble because you are with me."

"I'll not harm you, only keep you safe from harm."

"I know that; otherwise, I would not be here."

With his arm encircling her she crept close to his heart; but in him rose the thought: "This is no lovelorn, amorous woman, this is a suffering little sister seeking protection or a hurt child."

But since she had come, what else could she want but a love which her husband could not give her?

The woolen cape slid off her shoulders and as he toyed with the strings on her shirt, that slipped down too.

The upper part of her body, frail as a breath and so thin that ten fingers could span her waist, lay beside him like the stem of a flower. Her breasts were touchingly undeveloped so that one could pass

one's hand over them almost without noticing them.

And as he did, she guided his hand to the region of her neck where the breastbones protruded.

"Feel how thin I am," she whispered.

"You are—"

She let go of him quickly and laid her fingers on his lips.

"Don't say anything—please don't say anything. I know what I am. There is only one thing I don't know, how I happened to come here and what I want here."

Again there arose within him his former thought that made him timorous and doubtful of his masculine prerogative. His love for her was about to be transformed into pity.

Her picture as he first saw her at the Follenius' party came like a vision before him, brilliant, flower-like, with her two great suns of eyes and the triumphant smile on the diadem-crowned face.

And he thought too of the mystic attraction which had spun threads between them since their first meeting.

He loved that woman, and to-day she was lying in his arms.

Then why the pity? Why the doubt?

He held the woolen cape high and laid it over her so that it also covered his arm. They sat as though in the same nest. And he thought: "That is as it should be, as it ought to remain."

Then she began to speak, giving herself over to whispered confidence and plunged in shame.

“You must not think that I want to hold you responsible for me . . . I know what I’m doing . . . only I don’t know why I do it. My husband is fond of me—I’m fond of him too—I love him as one loves God and then again I love him as I would love the child I have not got . . . perhaps all this comes of not having a child, don’t you think so too? But rather give me no answer—let me talk . . . I must talk . . . I’ve wanted to the whole of the time and just once I wanted to lie in your arms, just as I’m doing now. Do you despise me because the imagination of a respectable woman is so unchaste? . . . But that is all I’ve wanted—nothing else . . . Is that unnatural? Is that an indication of wrong instincts? I don’t think so. I believe it’s just the desire to give you my entire confidence and still remain myself . . . and you must not blame yourself. No, you are not a seducer. You were there, and I said to myself, ‘You belong to this man’ . . . and yet I cannot belong to you . . . you could take me . . . I am yours . . . and I know my fate, for one who has done what I have done has no right to resist . . . and I don’t resist you . . . I would even kiss your hands—but I know you will break me . . . this hour will break me, that much is certain.”

She stopped. Warm tears dropped out of her eyes on his hand.

He was touched and silent. Again and again that thought recurred which he tried to put aside by conjuring up the brilliant picture of the past.

The rain continued to fall against the window panes as before. The singing of the water spouts harmonized with the other sounds.

Suddenly she started up with a scream.

"What is it?"

"Listen, some one's out there. Listen!"

Again his suspicion of Marion came to life. If she should be lurking out there? There would be no mercy for her rival on earth.

He listened and the riddle was solved.

The cats had come back again and were trying to get their prey. They sprang against the rails of the chicken coop hissing and spitting until the frightened crow in its desire to save itself would come so close to the staves that the claws of the destroyers could reach it. Hence the unruliness of the past few days.

Enraged, he jumped up, and since nothing else was at hand, he picked up an inkstand that stood on the writing desk, as Dr. Luther once had done, and hurled it through the half-open window at the murderous beasts who thereupon disappeared immediately.

When he came back into the room, he saw Herma

stretching out her arms to him with every indication of fear.

He told her what had happened outside and calmed her as best he could.

But, given as she was to fear, she kept turning to the window as though all manner of misfortune were about to descend upon them from that source.

And when he again took her in his arms, she seemed anxious and confused.

Then suddenly she sank to the ground before him and pressed her face against his knees.

"What is the matter, dear heart?" he said tenderly.

She lifted her head and whispered, "I want to ask a favor of you and lack the courage."

"Do you suppose a man could refuse what was asked of him in such an hour?"

"Oh, yes, if you knew what I want."

"You have confided so much to me, tell me this too."

"And you will not be angry with me, will not hold it against me? You're sure?"

"I promise you that in advance."

"Then I plead with you out of my inmost soul—give me my freedom. Let me go as I am and never come close to me again!—I know what I ask is presumptuous . . . It is as if I had made a fool of you . . . but I overestimated my strength . . . I see now that I can't do it . . . I will die of it . . .

I don't know now how I'll be able to face the new day . . . and how to face that other one who loves you far more than I do . . . and how I can look my husband in the face. No, before I do that, I'd sooner go away and hide on my uncle's estate. I know now that there are certain things one simply cannot do . . . the pulse beat just won't hold out that long . . . whether one wants to or not . . . And you've had your way too . . . you held me in your arms . . . have seen how little there is of me to love; so please, please let me go! And never try to see me alone again . . . if you want to come to see my husband, I will try to be a friend and an attentive hostess and will gladly listen and think to myself, 'He is the wisest of all' . . . but please don't let there be anything else . . . please, please never again!"

"I surmised this," thought Sieburth and was surprised that the self-denial did not hurt more.

Then as he took hold of her under the arms, she, misunderstanding his action, screamed, "No, no, no, have mercy on me. Think of your poor little crow outside. She can save herself, but I can no longer save myself from you."

"Yes, yes, you are already saved," he said, as he stroked her forehead smilingly.

And now she really did kiss his hands.

"How will I get her home," he thought, "so that she will not take cold in her wet coat?"

He thought of a woolen sweater he had bought for sailing but up to this time had never had occasion to use.

He got it from a drawer and put it on her.

"Bundle it up to-morrow and throw it in any corner. If some one should find it later on they'll be glad to keep it."

Then he hung the water-soaked coat over his arm and carefully guided her down the same steps, down which he had gone before with Marion.

The rain fell in torrents. Not a human being was in sight; no suspicious shadow slipped into the darkness before them.

In front of the garden entrance of the forester's cottage, he threw the coat over her shoulders. She threw her arms around his neck once again, breathed a short "Thank you" and disappeared.

Gone out of his life—perhaps forever. He roamed around in the night and in the rain for a long time. His soul was raw and disturbed and yet something very like tranquillity and release came over him.

"When I get back to my work at my desk," he thought, "no woman's eye will look over my shoulder."

In his love for Herma, he had lost Marion, and through this latest incident, Cilly's picture had vanished into the far distance.

Nevertheless, he made up his mind to go to the

Wendlands' the next day for he felt that he had a great deal to make up for in that quarter.

And when he went there he received the information that Cilly had gone away in the meantime, presumably to spend the winter in Berlin where she had relatives, in order to develop her talents—the existence of which he had never known—along the lines of commercial art.

He had an oppressive feeling that he was not altogether without responsibility in the formation of this resolve.

“So much the better,” he thought, “now I am altogether alone.”

But he little dreamed what it meant to be alone.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SALAMANDER AND THE BRACELET

THE Cheruscan, Fritz Kühne, was about to begin his fourth semester. The long vacation with the meadow-green of its sun-filled days, with the ruddy glow of its dusky nights, was over. Fog and frost, rain and darkness, had come and invaded his soul with melancholy and resentment.

"The devil take this autumnal gloom!" But it was at hand and whiningly demanded its right to existence.

The first fraternity meeting was scheduled for November third.

The trunk was packed, father's check pocketed, two kisses were imprinted on mother's cheeks; he wished his sisters good-looking fiancés, and then he was off!

Horace's *atra cura* rode with him in the carriage.

For everything was not going as it should in the fraternity. Although no fault was to be found with his duels. On the contrary, he had fought more than the usual number. Three decisive victories. Demeanor irreproachable. His prospects better than ever before to be assigned the most difficult combats.

But why had he been overlooked in the election of officers? Why did people rise to the top who could not compare with him? Why had he felt for some time that he was enveloped in a mist of estrangement punctuated every now and then by a jeer or a venomous dig? It was unwise to be defiant; if he nettled the others he would be lost; but this continual being on one's guard was troublesome and created a feeling of uncertainty which he tried vainly to overcome.

Of course, the good Lord had not given one a tongue for nothing and many a one who started something withdrew after the first encounter with a bloody nose, grinding his teeth. But what was there to be gained by these everlasting fusses, when one wanted to drink one's beer in peace?

One did not need to search far for the cause of all this. One needed only to recall a few discussions that took place at the beer table shortly after his last visit at Professor Sieburth's.

Subject: Bismarck.

Of course, Bismarck. How was it possible to overlook him if one ever looked up from one's lecture notes or beer seidels? For was he not the center, the judge, the hope, the mouthpiece of German thought and German feeling?

But Professor Sieburth disagreed with this. And as he thought, so thought the Cheruscan, Fritz Kühne.

It was as if the Professor had restored his sight. Whole floods of ominous, lurid light surged upon him and destroyed all patriotic pride and national confidence in his innermost soul. Bismarck was no longer the shining hero, Eckhart the Faithful, the Cherub with a sword girded about him who guarded the German garden of Eden. Bismarck was the demon, destroyer, vampire, the prince of Hell. Bismarck was the sinister Hagen Tronje who led the Nibelungs to their destruction. And if that was Fritz Kühne's conviction, he was man enough not to bury it in the depths of his heart.

For that reason there was a grave shaking of heads along the table at the students' gatherings.

For Prince Bismarck was regarded here not only as the glorious founder of the German Empire—if it were only that Fritz's heresy might have been condoned—but he was also an alumnus member of the "Hannovera" fraternity at Göttingen, and as such he was the pride and shining light of the entire student body of this group of fraternities.

To joke about him was blasphemy which could not go uncensured.

It was not possible to impose official fraternity penalties on the offender, for according to their constitution, influencing an individual's political leanings was not permitted, but there were plenty of ways and means by which he could be made to feel that his defection would not be tolerated.

And so the secret though none the less bitter campaign was inaugurated which was intended to break his spirit and to lead him back, a chastened sinner, to the only-saving dogma that the almighty Chancellor was nothing short of godlike.

The next development was that he was compelled to face adversaries known to be of far superior rating even by those who understood nothing about fencing. And it would have been a sad state of affairs if, in his confusion, he had made a blunder, but the opposite took place; not only did he come out of the bloodiest engagements gloriously but he even had the good fortune to score a brilliant victory over Zenthöfer, the universally feared star fencer of the "Masuria."

They might, perhaps, have tolerated his unreasonable political views if they had not feared for the reputation of the fraternity, and since they had hopes of making a perfectly normal fraternity brother of him, come what would, they wanted to discipline him so thoroughly that the last bit of rawboned democracy would be driven out of him.

And so at the very height of his progress in his own organization, he stood in sullen opposition to the majority. A cool, measured and sour friendliness was the keynote of their daily intercourse, and the more conscientiously he performed his duties, the more strained relations became—a condition which

had no name and upon which one could not put one's finger.

He arrived in Königsberg the day before the opening meeting, having definitely decided to meet any newly arising peril with a jovial indifference.

But that was more easily thought than done. The very first greetings showed him that the feeling against him had become more pronounced, if anything, since their banquet in honor of the Kaiser. Gibes ran riot, which, although they were not hurled directly at him, were obviously intended for him, and even "Shrewmouse," whose "special charge" he had been and who, because of this association, had previously shown a friendly spirit, made a noticeably hasty exit after extending a very lukewarm greeting.

Yet in spite of this condition when at eleven o'clock that night he reached for his coat, it was not through a coincidence that "Shrewmouse" stood at his side and said, "If it's agreeable to you, let's walk a bit together."

Fritz assented courteously and as they walked side by side and had discussed the pleasures of their vacations more or less casually, "Shrewmouse" suddenly began to speak in his peculiarly strident, yet nonchalant tone, "Let us hope that your three months' diet of acorns has had a beneficial effect on your train of thought as well."

Fritz felt himself blushing. "What do you mean by that, *mentor*?" he asked.

"During the last semester you spouted so much rot," the other answered, "that a complete revamping of your honorable self would be very salutary."

Fritz knew that from this moment the fight would be waged in the open.

"One question first," he answered. "Are you speaking to me this way of your own volition or have you been commissioned to make this disclosure to me?"

"Both," said "Shrewmouse," twirling his cane. "On the one hand, I deplore your sulkiness; on the other, I am told that the fraternity has resolved to preclude further crude onslaughts on our great Chancellor such as you permitted yourself in a belated fit of immaturity."

"I have a right to express my political convictions just as every one else has," answered Fritz, "and if my esteemed fraternity brothers do not like it, it's not my fault."

"Excellent!" cried "Shrewmouse," "if it were not for the fact that in this way you are slowly but surely babbling yourself out of your ribbon."

"I'd like to see who would have the face to deprive me of my ribbon if I win my matches and do everything I can to further the interests of the fraternity."

"Do you think we'd go to all this trouble about you, youngster," said "Shrewmouse," "if we weren't so thoroughly satisfied with your combats? I brought you up, my son, and even to-day I consider myself responsible for you and if you sin against the national spirit of the fraternities—"

"What is national spirit?" Fritz said, interrupting his former *mentor*. "To cringe before the man who has divided the German people into two opposing camps? Is that the national spirit?"

"I would just like to know where you've acquired that stubbornness," "Shrewmouse" reflected. "When I had you under my thumb, I didn't see a sign of it in you."

And Fritz thought to himself with no little triumph: "You, yourself, led me to the man who now controls my thoughts."

"At any rate, I've warned you," "Shrewmouse" continued, "and if one day you find yourself deprived of your fraternity cap and every cur insults you, it isn't my fault."

With that they separated and Fritz turned in the direction of that happy spot where the tin fishes inhabited the glass aquarium and Shakespeare and Goethe smiled benignly upon him.

The agricultural prosperity reflected by the check from his father made it possible for him to keep the room even while he was away so that he could always creep back into the same old nest instead of having

to hunt for new lodgings at the beginning of every semester like most of the others.

He thought again of that November evening when he had first attended Sieburth's lectures and, on returning, had entered this room thrilled with the words, "Woman and Thought," which this unusual man, who was a stranger to him, had hurled at him from the platform like an oracle.

"Woman and Thought." Yes, he stood ready to go to battle and suffer for his thoughts. His nearest approach to woman, however, had been occasional tender relations with waitresses and shopgirls.

He thought of the "Madonna" in the brothel to which the Professor had taken him and the others. He had been there twice since but had made no attempt to take her. He considered her the exclusive property of his teacher and as such held her sacred.

And then suddenly Helena's image appeared before him, so realistically that he could have jumped up and greeted her.

He had made no effort to meet her since that spring thunderstorm. He felt downcast whenever he thought of her. Often he would have liked to write her, but he did not know what to write about so he abandoned the idea. Eventually his anguish subsided and he was reconciled to her loss. The world fairly swarmed with pretty girls, so why did it necessarily have to be just this one?

But the old feeling reasserted itself and he took

refuge in the blessed hope that what separated them was all a misunderstanding.

"How would it be if I looked up the Professor?" he reflected.

After all Sieburth was responsible for the annoying situation in which he found himself and it was up to the Professor to help him get out of his predicament and if, through this visit, he were to meet Helena again, here, too, everything might turn out for the best.

He planned to go the very next day, but when the time arrived so many things came up that required his attention that he had to postpone it again.

And in the meantime he was overtaken by his fate.

There was a great deal of bustle at the first meeting of the fraternity. The active brothers were there to a man, also many associate members and alumni, as befitted the importance of the occasion, for the guests who had been sent there by the affiliated fraternities at the beginning of the term had to be looked after.

The most important thing of all was to make sure of the newly arrived freshmen who gave great promise as prospective members.

Great care had been exercised in assigning them their places at the table, so that they were almost breathless with astonishment. Not one of them was put next to Fritz, in all likelihood because the brothers were none too sure of his influence.

The official program proceeded in the usual manner.

The songs and the greetings took their regular course as prescribed. The new members, of course, had "lagged behind" during each *salamander* and the invited freshmen who were familiar with the whole hocus-pocus from hearsay, and who now felt like exalted beings because they could finally actually participate in the proceedings, screamed as loud as they could from sheer joy and self-importance.

To the right of Fritz sat "Claffey," who had three unsophisticated youngsters in tow and was entertaining them with cheeky jokes at which they shouted in spasmodic outbursts; at his left, a classmate of his, who had turned into a model of propriety through a complete lack of any sort of talent. "Genteel" Mr. Petereit, who was president this term, was in the chair.

He conducted the proceedings in a gentle, yet penetrating falsetto voice through which the consonants hissed and whistled like sword strokes.

Faces became overheated, the noise increased, and he alone remained pale and cool.

The official program was nearing its end when he rose once more and called "Silence!" down the room.

Fritz thought, "I'm probably mistaken, but it looks to me as if he had his eye on me particularly."

And "Genteel" Mr. Petereit began, "I am of the

opinion that we have one more duty of honor to perform to-day. I feel assured that I am voicing the sentiments, not only of all those present"—again his eyes sought those of Fritz—"but of all the fraternities associated with us when I respectfully tender our congratulations to an old alumnus whom we are proud to number among our brothers and who has just emerged victorious from another hard struggle. We nurse the fond hope that this man to whom Germany owes everything—"

"Hold on! What's coming now?" flashed through Fritz's brain.

"—will place his invaluable powers forever at the disposal of the Empire, and now we'll drink a thundering *salamander* to an everlasting *Vivat, crescat, floreat* for Prince Otto von Bismarck."

"Now show that you are a man!" Fritz's soul cried out.

"*Ad exercitium—*" And this time there was no mistaking the fact that as they sprang to their feet, a dozen members gazed at him.

What he did from now on was no longer voluntary. As if some higher authority controlled him and robbed him of any volition of his own, he laughed shrilly and jeeringly, turned his cap around so that its visor was at the back of his neck, as is customary in some drinking games, and remaining seated, shoved his elbows on the table without touching his glass.

A chorus of furious and horrified voices interrupted the clatter of glasses . . . many hands pointed at him . . . the concluding words stuck in "Genteel" Mr. Petereit's throat.

But he immediately knew the correct thing to do.

"Silence!" His voice rang through the hall and even though it vibrated a little, its cool decisiveness was still in evidence.

"Silence! The official meeting is suspended. The active and associate members as well as the honored alumni are requested to attend a special executive session."

So saying, he preceded the others into the adjoining room where the fraternity usually held its business meetings unless the room was otherwise engaged.

There was a general departure of the guests. The members of the visiting fraternities shrugged their shoulders pityingly, as much as to say, "We'd like to see a thing like that happen in our chapter," and the freshmen made foolish faces. Some zealous new members succeeded in inducing two or three to stay, but the others vanished, probably never to return.

Fritz, shunned by every one, jogged along with the brothers into the next room which stared bleakly and dimly at him.

The gas was quickly turned on and the flames sang through the foreboding silence. And when all of them had seated themselves at the long table, "Gen-

teel" Mr. Petereit preferred charges against him.

No such occurrence as this, he said, had ever taken place in the history of the "Cheruskia" fraternity—in all probability such behavior had never been duplicated in the annals of any *Corps*. One of their members who, if one were to judge by his attainments in fencing matches, had their best interests at heart, had not only had the presumption to defy openly the regulations governing their official meetings, but had had the audacity to withhold the proper tribute of respect from the greatest brother they had ever had and to whom every member of the *Kösen League* owed everlasting gratitude. Before he would proceed to propose any action, he would ask Brother Kühne what justification he could offer for his unruly behavior.

Fritz felt himself shaking from head to foot. Whether from cold or excitement, he could not say. It was clear to him that this was a matter of life and death, for, once ousted, his entire future would not suffice to regain the social esteem which every professional man needed more than his daily bread.

And again an inner voice admonished him, "Now be a man!"

"I maintain," he said, looking the presiding officer squarely in the eyes, "that my insubordination was the only proper reply to the unwarranted action of the man who presided."

Shouts of indignation rang out along the table.

"Genteel" Mr. Petereit, correct as always, rose and said, "After the accusation made against me, I do not feel in the position to continue as chairman. I ask you"—turning to the vice-president—"to take my place."

This fellow, a sluggish and awkward dunce, who owed his election entirely to his brawn, did not know what to do, when an alumnus who held a high position in the Court of Appeals prompted him by saying, "Demand his reasons."

"I demand your reasons," the vice-president echoed.

And Fritz continued, "It cannot be expected of me to know the whole constitution by heart, but this much I do know—that there is a specific rule which forbids any undue influence on religious, scientific and political questions. If the presiding officer does not abide by this and proposes a toast to Prince Bismarck, whom I regard as Germany's ruination, it becomes my duty to oppose it with every means at my disposal, or else I should not be worthy of the blue, white and gold ribbon I wear."

"You won't wear it much longer," a strident voice yelled into the constrained silence.

It was "Shrewmouse" who thus definitely abandoned him.

"We'll see about that, *mentor*," Fritz called out with a defiance that made his chest expand and filled his soul with gladness.

"Call for order and censure the interruption," the alumnus whispered to the chairman, and the latter did as he was told.

Then "Genteel" Mr. Petereit asked for the floor.

"Up to this time I have had no opportunity," he began with the cool intentness which did not desert him even now, "to refute the charge which the accused brother, Fritz Kühne, has made against me. I would like to protest that as far as I was concerned, it was not a political but a national issue—"

"Bravo," was shouted all along the table.

"And so I officially ask this gathering, shall we German fraternity students hide our national feeling under a bushel because one of our members does not choose to share it?"

Fritz sprang up.

"Any one who doubts my national feeling insults me and I demand an apology."

His voice fell like the outcry of a tortured animal on every listening ear.

The chairman turned helplessly to the man behind him but before the latter could come to his assistance, "Genteel" Mr. Petereit had found a way out.

"I intended to say, the manner of displaying national feeling," he explained, "and that our brother does not concur in this he cannot deny in the light of what has happened."

And with that this incident was closed—closed to the disadvantage of Fritz. But he had still another

bolt to shoot; if that, however, failed of its mark, he was lost.

He asked for the floor again and said, "In the speech with which the presiding officer prefaced his toast, some few words were spoken of which I took very particular notice. They referred to Prince Bismarck and were 'who has just emerged victorious from another hard struggle.' I ask the president whether or not by the 'struggle' he meant the recent elections to the Prussian Diet."

For the first time the "Genteel" Mr. Petereit was nonplused.

"Rubbish!" he hissed, and made a gesture as if to brush away a fly that was annoying him.

And Fritz continued, "Then I ask the chair whether I have the right to demand an answer or not."

And the addressed turned and saw to his horror that the high jurist was quietly nodding his head.

"Well then, in the devil's name, *yes!*" screamed Mr. Petereit, entirely forgetting his customary gentility.

Fritz immediately availed himself of this advantage.

"Now I'll ask the assembled brothers and beg them to decide whether we are dealing here with a political, or with a national question." Again there was silence. Each one was probably seeking a way of escape from the force of this logic.

Then the alumnus, who up to this time had come to the rescue of the vice-president, asked to speak. He stood, lanky, tall, and smiling, with the ribbon of his glasses drawn behind his ear and nestling in his curly graying hair.

"My dear fraternity brothers," he said, rubbing his finely chiseled judicial hands one against the other, "it is cold in here and high time that we ended this. Our president will forgive me if I, too, find his behavior at the banquet not quite in order, since, judging by what he said, there is no doubt as to the political nature of his speech. Even if the rest of us feel as he does, should there be one among us who has conscientious scruples against the laudatory sentiments expressed about our great Chancellor, they were out of place, especially as they came unexpectedly and gave the member in question no chance quietly to withdraw. So it can be understood and forgiven that, being a young man of character, he could find no other remedy except to retaliate by offsetting the one wrong by another. There is no doubt but that he should have reflected whether or not his action would be harmful to the fraternity, which it unquestionably has been. He should have told himself that his interests would have been amply protected by a talk with the president right after the banquet, or he could have handed in a protest against the action at the next business meeting, and he could have assuaged his conscience as to the drinking of the

salamander on the grounds that he considered it an act of duress . . . I must say, however, that an ameliorating circumstance is to be found in the fact that the time was too short for all these reflections, but naturally the instincts of true organization feeling should have dictated seemly behavior, and because of the fact that at the decisive moment these instincts did not go into action, there should, in my estimation, be a mild punishment. I would recommend a two weeks' suspension for Brother Fritz Kühne."

There was not a word of protest voiced against the speaker, whose high standing was not confined to fraternity circles, and the acting chairman presented the proposition.

Fritz, who felt the force and significance of all that had been said, bowed to the sentiment and declined to take advantage of an answer.

The verdict was unanimously approved as given, but in the hateful looks that were cast in his direction, he read another which would be administered only at the end of this period of punishment when he would don his cap and ribbon once again and would put in an appearance at the meeting.

Only one of all of them had the courage to speak to him and that was "Claffey," that jolly, good fellow.

As they stood side by side in the cloakroom, he whispered to him, "You seem to be a God-damned

Red, but you carried yourself mighty well. Congratulations!"

And secretly, he shook his hand.

Fritz was having a lonely time of it.

He spent almost all of his time in his room for he was ashamed to be seen on the street without his colors. The landlady brought him his meals from a neighboring inn and only after it was dark would he go for walks in districts where he was sure he would not meet his fraternity brothers, and members of any other fraternity for that matter.

With a sense of horror he was anticipating the impending resumption of relations which had become untenable long ago. What would become of him if the hostility harbored by his fraternity brothers were to be put into action?

Hardly one of them would deal with him as justly or as considerately as the alumnus had done, and if even his former *mentor* showed him the cold shoulder, how would the others react who were not linked to him by personal bonds of friendship?

Not one friend did he have to advise him. Not one human soul stood by him in his misery. Then he thought of Professor Sieburth, and at the same time of the girl who had stood so bravely at his side during that thunderstorm. The fact of their present estrangement was no longer to be reckoned with, for one little word of explanation would clarify the

whole misunderstanding. Sieburth and she seemed to melt into one in his mind. If he looked him up he would at the same time come close to her. If he were to receive advice from him, she would put her seal on it.

Well then, why hesitate any longer? The way was open to him, the only one that offered any hope.

On the following evening he rang the bell which he had not touched for nearly half a year. No one came. The sound which came to his ears through the locked doors died away unheard.

"I will wait awhile," he decided.

Patiently he walked up and down on the pavement opposite, keeping the house in sight. Night frost was in the air. Fog enshrouded the lamps which were gradually being lit.

And at last she came—she, she—only she!

She seemed to have grown again although her head was bowed and she walked with sagging knees, as if she were tired.

"Miss Schimmelpfennig!"

A little cry.

"Mr. Kühne, you! Mr. Kühne, you!"

There was not a trace of that misunderstanding to be found; it was joy. No doubt, it was joy with which she greeted him; but behind it lay something else too, a hope, a deliverance, a relief in deep trouble.

And then, "How good that you are here again!"

I did not think of you at all. But you will surely know a remedy. You will stand by me, won't you?"

"If I can, by all means! But unfortunately, I need help just as you do, in all probability more than you do!"

"You wanted to see the Professor?"

He affirmed it.

"He works at the library until seven o'clock every day. You'll have to wait until then."

"And your mother? I rang but nobody opened the door."

"My mother—that is just it! Come upstairs with me. Please come with me—please do come!"

She unlocked the door and hurried up the stairs ahead of him.

When he stepped into the room she had already lit the lamp and was just putting the glass chimney over the wick.

"It is warm in here. Please take off your overcoat and sit down!"

He conformed to her wish.

Everything about her was hasty, anxious and commanding. She seemed like one who had neither the time nor the humor to exercise scruples.

"It is a piece of good fortune that you are here. I was terribly stupid that last time."

"So was I," he said.

"I always wanted to write you!"

"So did I," he said.

"But now everything is all right, isn't it? And I can tell you everything, can't I?"

"Everything," he said.

"Well then, listen!" She pushed a chair close to him and threw herself into it. "It was the day before yesterday, in the morning . . . we were sitting at breakfast and Mother was reading the paper . . . All of a sudden she cried out loud. I asked, 'What is it?' She said, 'Nothing.' . . . I asked again and again but each time she said, 'It is nothing, nothing at all' . . . but when I wanted to pull the paper towards me, she tore it away and put it in her pocket and then naturally I got more inquisitive but she got angry and said, 'Mind your own business and don't ask any more questions' . . . and then she began to go from one room to the other, talking to herself all the time. I didn't understand much of it, only a word occasionally. 'Such an outrage!' and, 'What effect will that have?' and, 'What will he do anyway?' looking at the Professor's wall the whole time. There was no doubt that it referred to him and to no one else and at noon when I came home from school, she was not there and there was a note on the table: 'Fix dinner for him, everything is there. I have no time.' . . . So I prepared the meal and took it in to him. You can imagine how my heart pounded . . . but he was jolly and even joked about my serving him. Then I began to doubt that it concerned him or thought that perhaps he

did not know about it yet. In the afternoon I had to go to school again and when I came back at four, she hadn't yet gotten home. She only returned towards supper time looking pale and very much upset. I cried and begged her to tell me but she gritted her teeth and put me off . . . During the night, through the door, I heard her sigh and toss around. And more words—'He must be told,' 'I can't tell him,' and more like it . . . And when morning came, she didn't sit down at the machine; and you know how industrious she is. She never goes out except to the store on Saturday to get her pay . . . But she put on her calling dress again and when I got home at noon, it was as it had been the day before . . . and again to-day. I couldn't stand it any longer so I played hooky and watched her furtively in order to follow her for I had to know what she is doing secretly . . . But what does she do? . . . I haven't been able to get to the bottom of it . . . I only know this much: She goes to acquaintances; to casual acquaintances with whom we used to associate or whom we used to meet here and there . . . she stays there about three-quarters of an hour or perhaps only half an hour . . . Then she comes downstairs, consults a piece of paper which she takes out of her handbag and goes further . . . I would have followed her further but I had to be home to cook the Professor's dinner."

"And he still seems the same?" Fritz Kühne interrupted.

"Always the same," she replied. "If anything, happier than usual. When he came back from Rauschen in the early autumn, he seemed rather strange. He didn't seem to hear what one said to him; he always looked into space. He looked like one in mourning, or like—one can't really define it exactly. Only when the library work started and in the evening—" She hesitated a little and then went on in a whisper, "Yes, when in the evening a girl's voice could be heard through the wall now and then—in the summer he hardly ever had such company—when that started again, one could say he was really himself once more . . . and in the morning the lamp is nearly empty. That means that he has worked the whole night through again, and he can still do it at this time because classes don't begin until Monday."

"It is your opinion, then, that some misfortune has come to him and that he doesn't know it yet?" Fritz asked.

"How could it be otherwise, for it wouldn't be possible for him to light-heartedly disregard it while Mother eats her heart out? We both love him so, and really, I don't know for whom to fear most, for Mother or for him . . . Oh, dear, Mr. Kühne, advise me, help me, what shall I do?"

Fritz thought hard but could find no way of coming to her assistance.

"Didn't the idea occur to you," he said, pointing to a stack of old newspapers lying on the window sill, "that it might be wise to get hold of the issue your mother hid from you?"

"Oh, how stupid of me!" she cried, striking her forehead. "I should have thought of that."

"I will get it from the newspaper office the first thing to-morrow morning," he said, "and then we'll see what comes of it."

At that moment quick, light, masculine footsteps came up the stairs and a key was inserted in the lock of the door opening into the adjoining room.

"It is he," said Helena, and pressed her hand to her heart. "I'll go and make a light for him and tell him at the same time that you are here."

With that she dodged out of the door.

A few minutes passed—the two voices could be heard through the wall—then she came back leaving the door open behind her and motioned him that he was expected, and two or three moments later he stood before him and the cool, porcelain-like hand was in his.

"It is nice of you," he heard the familiar voice say, "to come right at the beginning of the term like this. If the pursuit of law still leaves you time enough to nibble at the pabulum I have to offer, we

can at once discuss what would be most advisable for you to study."

"Undoubtedly I will attend your lectures as before, Professor," answered Fritz, "but that is not what brings me to you."

"Out with it then," he said, pushing him into the corner of the sofa he knew so well and turning the seat of the swivel chair so that he sat directly opposite him. The lamplight fell just as sharply on his haggard face as it had on that winter evening during which he had put the "triumphant beast" through its paces.

And Fritz began to tell his story. Told of the change in his convictions for which the Professor had been responsible, of how he had been brought into conflict with his fraternity brothers, and of the catastrophal climax of recent date. He relied upon the Professor's worldly knowledge to guide him as to his future behavior.

That was about the story he had prepared but in the telling of it the tormenting thought jerked continually through his brain, "There he sits and a calamity is waiting to descend upon him and he has no inkling of his impending danger."

"It seems to me that I've created a fine situation," the Professor said, laughing out loud as Fritz finished, "and I have every reason to reproach myself for I should have known that such ideas incite

young heads like yours to white heat, while to the more mature mind they only create a well-tempered warmth in which worldly prudence does not reach the melting point. As a matter of fact, you went too far in the expression of your feelings, for we must not forget that those who hold contrary views through convictions have the same right to an existence that we have. If we do not understand how to place the proper valuation on our opponent as a man, we lessen our own importance. We can well afford to pay our respects to him and in doing so we learn to rid our souls of hate."

"But you, yourself, sometimes indulge in polemics, Professor," Fritz interjected, "that know no mercy."

"One indulges in polemics," he answered, "as the need arises. Self-preservation is its gauge—or call it self-defense if you like—and no one has ever questioned its justification . . . but to return to your case, I remember that at the time of your first visit I showed due deference to your plans for your future and warned you against any changes. To-day the situation is different and I must take the opposite view. Turn your back on your fraternity as quickly as possible and be glad to have escaped from that clique, which only fosters mediocrity, and through its patterning of the individual after a given mold, stifles every germ of any original talent. . . . You may, perhaps, have a less profitable career; you may find yourself excluded from the benefits of the

high functionaries, but to counterbalance that you will feel within yourself the growth and development of what Goethe calls the greatest boon of mankind, which remains the greatest boon even if it ends on the scaffold of isolation."

"Is solitude then so terrible?" Fritz asked, "that you speak of it as a scaffold?"

"I did not say solitude, I said isolation," replied the Professor, "and these two are as radically different as heaven and hell . . . then too, I have another bit of advice ready for you: Keep away from needless tension which this feeling of maladjustment brings with it. It leads to embitterment, and this must be shunned as if it were the plague itself. You are in the fortunate position of being able to turn your back on your opponents, and that is what I should like to impress upon you. I will be sorry, of course, not to see you any more at my lectures, but I can only tell you one thing: Transfer your registration from here to one of the western universities as quickly as possible. In that way, your affiliation with the fraternity ceases automatically, for I am sure you'll gladly waive taking your ribbon along with you."

Fritz saw at once that he could not possibly be given better advice and was astonished that this solution had not occurred to him.

He got up and stretched out his hand to the Professor. Then the thought came to him again that the latter was apparently in danger. He had for-

gotten it entirely during Sieburth's calm and deliberate talk and he berated himself for his egoism in thinking only of himself.

He would gladly have imparted a word of warning, but he did not know in just what language to couch it, so he took his leave, feeling relieved and depressed at the same time.

"If you are ever in Königsberg again, don't fail to come and see me," the Professor called after him, and Fritz thanked him with another bow.

When he knocked on the door of the living room it was the mother's voice that called to him to come in. She had finally come home from her secret errands. She sat in the corner of the sofa, upset and miserable, with disordered hair and sunken eyes, hardly able to keep up from sheer exhaustion.

But when she recognized him, she jumped right up with an almighty effort.

"You, Mr. Kühne!" she cried in a spasm of pure delight, and shook off Helena, who was embracing her protectingly. "You come just at the right time . . . you are just the one person I need . . . go into the kitchen, child, and prepare the Professor's supper for him. Go on, do it now!"

And she pushed the undecided, hesitating girl out of the door with a quick thrust.

She planted herself squarely in front of Fritz, breathing deeply and trembling while the corners of her mouth drooped perceptibly.

"Good heavens, Mr. Kühne," she lamented, "what is going to come of this?"

"Do tell me what it is about," he urged.

"Oh, you don't know about it yet? I thought you had come on that account . . . Don't you really know?"

And when he repeated that he knew nothing whatever about it, she took a crumpled and soiled newspaper out of her pocket, unfolded it and handed it to him pointing to the last page.

In confusion his glance traveled over the advertisements of all kinds.

"There, there, there!" and she pointed with her finger to an inconspicuous item.

He read:

NOTICE!

Professor Sieburth is requested to call at my workshop for the bracelet he presented to my daughter, as same is of no use to us.

Königsberg i. Pr., Oberhaberberg 16,
Krupkat, Locksmith.

"What does this mean?" he asked, dumfounded.

"Don't you see it yet?" she cried in distracted derision. "That means he will be disgraced . . . that means he is to be ruined . . . it means that he won't be able to get his promotion . . . and it means a great deal more besides. One can't foretell how much it may mean."

"You think there is an intrigue behind all this?" he asked.

"Why an intrigue?" she laughed. "Oh, no—no doubt it is founded on truth. There have been enough of such young things of easy virtue with him, but he has the greatest respect for any one who is decent . . . and he has been liberal too . . . much too liberal with those little sluts . . . they would do it for nothing, too, just as they do for the students . . . but this one must have bragged at home or her father must have heard of it . . . and in order to whitewash herself, she painted herself as innocent and as having been seduced . . . and that is the father's revenge."

Fritz thought of his own experiences. On Junkerstrasse and in the Königsgarten, they ran around by the dozen every night when they came from business, each one prettier than the one before. If the flirtation was successful, one took her along or dropped her as one wished. Many of the students never went to the prostitutes because these were at hand and much more attractive. But sometimes it so happened that they were still virgins and then they wanted real love, heartfelt affection, and it was hard to shake them. For that reason he had kept them at a distance, but if in passing they threw one a tender glance, it sometimes became fairly difficult. If one wore cap and ribbon one was forbidden to accost

them anyhow, and had to follow them to dark places where one would not be noticed.

Such were the customs of student life and no one took exception to them.

No doubt, the Professor had done the same thing, only that he occupied a position of trust and honor in which one had to consider social consequences.

And Mrs. Schimmelpfennig continued, "If one only knew what one could do to straighten out this mess. For three days I have been running around from one acquaintance to another wherever I may once have had influence. I go and tell them how good he is and how conscientious and that all this is nothing but vileness and slander . . . but now there's hardly any one else whom I know. Do you know any one to whom I could turn?"

"I know you mean well," answered Fritz, "but I am afraid that this method will only make things worse for it isn't possible for you to reach the circles in which this incident may have given offense and those people to whom you've clarified the situation had either not noticed it before or, if they had, have only now through this discussion become really interested."

Discouraged, she shrank together, a pitiful object of utter dejection.

And Fritz quieted her by saying, "It may not be so bad after all. The Professor is not married; no

one can say anything dishonorable about him and any one who is morally shocked is a hypocrite. The most that can possibly happen is that people will laugh at him."

Mrs. Schimmelpfennig swept aside all his assurances with a wave of her hand.

"If it weren't for the women!" she said with a hopeless, staring expression in her eyes.

"What about the women?"

But she paid no attention to him. With a sibylline muttering she reiterated, "If it weren't for the women, if it weren't for the women!"

And suddenly she jumped up and cried, "You have to tell him."

"What business is it of mine?" he remonstrated. "If I presume to mix myself up in his private affairs he'll throw me out."

But she insisted, and when he continued to resist, she started to plead with him. The Professor must not be left in ignorance or perhaps already to-morrow the calamity would be upon him. She did not feel equal to the emergency—she would go through the floor with shame. He was the only one who had the strength to do it.

"Put the sheet of newspaper on his table," he advised, "or send it through the mail. In that way he'll have it the first thing in the morning."

"No, no, no!" And she continued to beg. She implored him by all the favors the Professor had

done for him, by all the knowledge he had gleaned from him, until he finally said, almost laughing, "All right, give me the paper! He can't do more than kick me out."

And pulling himself together he knocked once more on the dark door.

When the Professor saw him enter a faint shadow of ill humor glided over his face. "Did you leave something here by mistake?" he asked, his glance roaming the length of the writing desk.

"Forgive me, Professor," stammered Fritz, "you have been of so much service to me—even just now—so please don't think that I want to repay you with ingratitude—what is more, I feel that it is my duty—to perform this service for you—which no one else can do for—"

At which he stopped short.

"What have you there?" the Professor asked imperiously, pointing to the newspaper which in his embarrassment Fritz was twisting in his fingers.

Instead of answering he laid it in front of him smoothing it out and pointed to the name at the beginning of the notice.

The Professor looked at it for a long time with knitted brows. Then he leaned back in his chair and said with the quiet chuckle that always denoted a climax of enjoyment, "Yes, my dear friend, that's what you call hard luck!"

And after a short silence he continued, "This

affair must have been gathering moss for some time. . . . As a rule I have any amount of truck in my drawer with which to satisfy these obligations, when money does not seem to be the thing to offer, but just a bracelet—! I don't remember having given any one a bracelet within the year! . . . Well, be that as it may, I thank you just the same. You have acted like a real friend." And he stretched out his hand to Fritz and in offering it this time gave him a warm, manly handshake.

Then breaking into his customary laughter, he said: "You didn't have the courage before, wasn't that it?"

"I did not know about it before," Fritz said in defense.

"Then you must have heard about it just now from my landlady?"

And as Fritz corroborated it, "That dear soul must have been very much troubled over it. . . . I must go and cheer her up a bit right away—and what about the girl?"

"She doesn't know what it's all about, but she is worried too."

"One always gets more love in this world than one deserves—but I'm sorry about the girl. This kind of thing should remain foreign to her for some time to come . . . good-by, dear friend! The advice I preached to you before might under these circumstances be applied to myself just as well . . . well,

we'll see how much backbone we have." And with another handshake, he accompanied him to the door.

As Fritz walked into the living room, Helena came towards him.

"Mamma is not well," she said. "She has stretched out on the bed and begs to be excused," and then bending close to his ear, she whispered, "I know it now, Mamma just told me."

"And what is your opinion of it?"

She heaved a deep sigh. "What can one say?—we poor things!"

And then she escorted him downstairs, for the front door was already locked.

And as they bade each other good-by, he said, "We won't see each other for a long time. I'm going to another university."

She gave a slight start and then held out her hand to him very cordially, saying, "Don't forget us altogether."

The door closed. And already a world lay between them.

